

JESUS IN HIS OWN WORDS

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# JESUS IN HIS OWN WORDS

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‘The teaching of Christ far excelleth all the teachings of the saints ; and whoso had his spirit would find therein hidden manna. But it happeneth that many from often hearing the gospel feel but little desire for it, for they have not the spirit of Christ. And whosoever will fully and with relish understand the words of Christ, must strive to conform his whole life to him.’

THOMAS A KEMPIS

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## INTRODUCTION

**T**HIS LITTLE BOOK will, it is hoped, prove useful both to Christian and non-Christian readers. It contains all the recorded utterances of Jesus Christ, arranged in their chronological order, with just sufficient commentary to explain the circumstances in which they were uttered and, where necessary, to make their meaning clear. Incidentally, it also shows the plan of the Saviour's ministry and gives a coherent picture of his public life as a whole.

Whether one believes in Jesus Christ or not, he is clearly someone to know. To say the least of it, no single individual has more profoundly affected the course of human thought and history. And, although Jesus himself left no writings, his utterances were so faithfully treasured and have been recorded so fully, that through them we can form a very accurate and vivid picture of him. Goethe, in one of his letters to Zelter (Bohn's Standard Library, p. 413), remarks that it is beyond the power of the painter to give a true picture of Jesus Christ; this, he implies, can only be obtained from a study of his words: 'Each of Christ's appearances, every one of his utterances tends to bring what is above us within the range of contemplation. He is always rising himself, and raising others from what is low, and as this is most striking with sinners and transgressors, such instances occur very frequently. This grand, moral, Prophet-like act cannot, however, be sensuously represented . . .'

But Jesus, as Christians believe, was much more than a prophet, and his words indeed often reflect the mystery of his Personality. One could hardly make those words one's constant study and at the same time ignore the question, Who really was Jesus Christ? That may be the reason why it is not possible to put him in the category of famous characters of the past whom we can easily get to know by means of



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letters, diaries, memoirs etc., but who do not in any sense constitute a personal problem for the reader.

It might seem unnecessary to recommend Christians to study the words of Jesus Christ. But, as St. Paul said, 'faith comes by hearing'. To-day, as in the Early Church, it is from the preacher and teacher, rather than from the written word, that Christians have learned to believe and what to believe. The Catechism and Bible History are more convenient textbooks than the Gospels. Besides, speaking for the Catholics, it is the living but invisible Christ, now reigning in heaven, guiding the Church by his Holy Spirit, and really present himself in the Blessed Sacrament, to whom our attention, like our prayer, is directed. Nevertheless, it must be of the greatest possible interest to every intelligent Christian to see exactly how Jesus Christ delivered his message to mankind. Then too, it is one thing to believe that Jesus Christ was truly Man, and quite another to know the Man that he was—it is only through his actual words and actions that we can know that Man. Above all, Jesus Christ himself, as he lived on this earth, is surely the best and most authentic exponent and exemplar of the Christian spirit. He came to make men sons of God, but he was the Son of God. It is to his human life that we must look for the perfect model of Divine sonship as practicable for ourselves. To understand the origins of our Faith, to acquire a personal knowledge of Jesus Christ, and to develop a true insight into the Christian spirit, we must study Jesus in his own words.

The historical records of Jesus' human life are principally the four 'Gospels' of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. These are not formal biographies of Jesus Christ, but, as St. Luke explained, 'an account of the things that have been fulfilled amongst us, even as the original eyewitnesses . . . delivered them to us,' i.e. a record of significant episodes, teachings

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and discourses (more or less summarized) such as were contained in the preaching of the Apostles. Matthew was himself an Apostle and is said to have written his Gospel in Aramaic, the language of Palestine at the time, but we only have it in Greek. The other three Gospels were composed in Greek. Mark we first hear of as living in Jerusalem some ten years after the Crucifixion; he is said to have acquired the information recorded in his Gospel chiefly from St. Peter. Luke was one of St. Paul's companions, and after writing his Gospel he wrote the Acts of the Apostles, which tell the story of Paul's missionary journeys up to A.D. 59-61. As the second narrative ends abruptly there, Luke must have written it soon after the year 61. His Gospel was therefore written some years before A.D. 61, and there is strong evidence that Matthew and Mark both wrote theirs before Luke. The fourth evangelist, John, was also an Apostle, and he wrote his Gospel in his old age, towards the end of the century. The Gospels are therefore contemporary records, either written by, or containing the accounts of, eyewitnesses, and conforming to the common preaching of those official eyewitnesses, the Apostles.

Palestine is a small country, about 140 miles in length and about 60 miles at its broadest part. It consists roughly of a central block of mountains ('the hill country'—Luke 1, 39) surrounded on three sides by plains and on the fourth by the valley of the Jordan. This latter is a quite exceptional gash in the earth's surface, dropping to 800 feet below sea level in the bed of the Sea of Galilee, and to as much as 2,600 feet below sea level at the bottom of the Dead Sea. Thus, while the mountain city of Jerusalem is over 2,500 feet above sea level, Jericho, only twenty-three miles away, is about 900 feet below sea level. In the Psalms, Jerusalem is God's holy mountain, and God himself is frequently compared to a rock,



a fastness, a hill-fortress. 'As the mountains stand round about Jerusalem [and protect it], so is Jehovah round about his people.'

North of the central block of mountains, which occupied most of Judaea and Samaria, was Lower Galilee, the principal scene of Our Lord's ministry. Here too are hills and mountains, but intercepted by wide and fertile valleys which, at the time of Our Lord, formed much-used caravan routes from Asia to the Mediterranean. Nazareth is a hill-town of Lower Galilee and the neighbouring hills command magnificent views. After crossing these hills the road to the Lake of Gennesaret or Sea of Galilee descends almost precipitously to the town of Tiberias, 1,700 feet below. At the time of Our Lord, Tiberias was a fashionable spa and the Lake was ringed by thriving cities, in which fishing, fish-curing, boat-building, dye-works, pottery kilns, etc., gave employment to a large population. 'The Lake, as Jesus knew it, must have been one of the busiest and most cosmopolitan districts of Palestine. Greek, Latin and Aramaic were spoken in its towns. . . . When Jesus walked the roads of Galilee he met the long caravans working southwards across the fords of Jordan; he saw the sun gleam on the spears of Roman maniples and cohorts; he met bands of Phoenician merchants travelling into Galilee, encountered the litters and chariots of the great, and saw the bands of strolling players and jugglers and gladiators bound for the gay Greek cities of the Decapolis' (H. V. Morton: *In the Steps of the Master*).

Politically, Palestine was part of the Roman Empire, which by then included all the countries bordering on the Mediterranean. The Jews had themselves appealed for Roman protection, in 63 B.C., and in 40 B.C. the Roman Senate had recognized the Idumaeen Herod the Great as King of Judaea, under the suzerainty of Rome. Idumaea lay south of the Dead

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Sea, and its people had been forced to accept Judaism a century earlier by one of the Machabean rulers, John Hyrcanus. On Herod's death, in 4 B.C., his kingdom was divided between three of his sons. Archelaus became ruler of Idumaea, Judaea and Samaria, Herod Antipas Tetrarch of Galilee and Peraea (east of the Jordan), and Philip Tetrarch of Ituraea (east of the Jordan and north of Peraea). Archelaus proved unsatisfactory as a ruler and the Emperor Augustus replaced him in A.D. 6 by a Roman Governor. Pontius Pilate filled this office from A.D. 26 to 36. Herod Antipas was banished by the Emperor Gaius in A.D. 39, and Philip died in A.D. 34. Under the Roman Governors of Judaea, the Jews enjoyed a limited home-rule, being governed by the Sanhedrin or supreme Jewish council presided over by the High Priest.

The Gospels make mention of Jewish priests, scribes, lawyers, Sadducees, Pharisees and Herodians. The Sadducees (descendants of Sadok, a former High Priest) formed an important section of the priesthood, though not every Sadducee was a priest. They were selfish opportunists, quite satisfied with a state of affairs that gave them a privileged position and access to wealth. In particular, the Temple worship and its sacrifices had become a vast commercial affair, enormously profitable to the priestly families who controlled it. The Pharisees—the word means 'separate'—were a powerful Jewish party, intensely nationalist and religious, but absorbed in the outward practices of their religion, to the neglect of its spirit. Scribes copied, studied and expounded the Mosaic Law and its accretions, i.e. customs and traditions which had accumulated around it and acquired the force of law; in the Gospels 'scribe' is synonymous with 'lawyer'. The Herodians may have been a political party that supported the House of Herod and the Roman authority on which it depended.



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The inscription on the Cross was written in the three languages current at the time in Palestine: Aramaic, Greek and Latin. Here as elsewhere, Aramaic is called Hebrew, but Hebrew proper was no longer a living language and was understood only by the learned. The Jews who returned from captivity in Babylon in 536 B.C. had found that Aramaic, the Semitic language of Syria (Aram, originally the name of the fifth son of Sem—Gen. 10, 22), had spread southwards, and it continued to be the common vernacular there. Jesus will therefore have usually spoken in Aramaic, and some of his actual phrases (e.g. *Talitha cum*—Maiden arise; *Abba*—Father) are given in the Gospels. Greek was the language of the cultured classes, especially of those less nationalist in outlook like the Herodians. Latin was the language of the Romans.

A note will be useful on the relative value of the different coins mentioned in the Gospels. These are: *talent* = 60 minas; *mina* = 100 drachmas; *drachma*, a Greek silver coin having practically the same value as the Latin silver *denarius*; *as*, a bronze coin valued at 16 to the denarius; *quadrans* = a quarter of an as; *mite* = an eighth of an as. The *shekel*, *stater* and 'silver piece' (*argenteus*) were each worth four drachmas. There was also a silver *two-drachma* piece or half-shekel.

A few words are necessary regarding the Jewish expectation of the Messiah. The Jews were marked out from all other peoples by their intransigent monotheism: they worshipped the one and only God, whose proper and ineffable Name was Jehovah or Yahweh, meaning 'He who is'. (In reading aloud the Sacred Scriptures they substituted 'my Lord' for the ineffable Name.) They believed, and rightly, that God had entrusted their nation with a special mission in the world and that they enjoyed his special protection. And they believed too in a future 'Day of Yahweh' which would be the consummation of their mission and their history. God

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would then at length manifest his power to all the world, overthrow the enemies of Israel, and establish his Kingdom on earth. A divinely appointed leader, the 'Anointed One', would bring about this transformation and rule the Kingdom of God on earth. 'Anointing' was an outward sign of consecration, dedication to a particular mission, as we see from the anointing of Aaron, of the Kings of Juda and of the prophets in the Old Testament. The word 'Messiah' is a Greek rendering of the Aramaic word meaning 'Anointed', and the word 'Christ' comes from *Christos*, the Greek word meaning 'anointed'. So Jesus Christ means Jesus the Messiah, Jesus the Anointed One. Jesus himself declared that he had been anointed for his mission (cf. Chap. 2: Jesus' Baptism).

Some Jews pictured the future kingdom as a temporal, Jewish kingdom; others looked for a superhuman Messiah whose kingdom would be worldwide; but all expected the Messiah to be a dominant figure in a worldly sense, victorious, powerful, regal. They failed to attribute to the Messiah those passages in the prophets which spoke of a Servant of God who by his sufferings would redeem God's people from their sins, e.g. 'He was wounded for our iniquities, he was bruised for our sins. The chastisement that gave us peace was upon him, and by his bruises we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, everyone hath turned aside into his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all' (Isaiah 53, 5 and 6).

To conclude these introductory notes, here is a description of Our Lord's probable appearance from Dr. Stapfer's *Palestine in the Time of Christ* (quoted by H. V. Morton, op. cit.): 'Upon his head he must have worn the turban, the national head-gear, used alike by rich and poor. . . . Everyone wore the head covered. The turban he wore was probably white. It was fastened under the chin by a cord, and at the side fell



down to the shoulders and over the tunic. Under his turban he wore his hair rather long and his beard uncut. His tunic, and underneath vesture, was of one piece without seam; it was therefore of some value, and had probably been given him by one of those women who "ministered to him of their substance." Over this he wore the *talith*, loose and flowing. The mantle was not white, for we are told it became white during the Transfiguration. It was not red, for that was only the military colour. It is possible it was blue, for blue was then very common, or it may have been simply white with brown stripes. In any case, Jesus had at the four corners of this mantle the *Ciccith*, blue or white fringes. He wore sandals on his feet, as we learn from John the Baptist; and when he was travelling, going from place to place, he doubtless wore a girdle round the loins and carried a stick in his hand. . . .'

By the kind permission of the General Editors of the Westminster Version of the Sacred Scriptures, all Our Lord's words have been taken from that reliable text. Here and there an alternative reading or explanation is added [in square brackets], and we have replaced the names of English coins (shilling, penny, etc.) by those used in the gospels and enumerated above. The author is greatly indebted to the four gospel commentaries of Fr. M. J. Lagrange, O.P., and his *Gospel Harmony*, as adapted by Mgr. Barton, to Mgr. Knox's translation and commentaries, and to works on the life of Our Lord by Fr. F. Prat, S.J., Fr. J. Lebreton, S.J., and Fr. A. Durand, S.J., to mention only those most frequently consulted. Dr. Montagu James' *Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford University Press) has supplied some interesting sayings, not found in the Gospels.

An 'Index to Our Lord's Sayings', supplemented by the Table of Contents, will facilitate reference to Our Lord's words and deeds.

## CHAPTER I

### THE BIRTH OF THE MESSIAH

THE CHRISTIAN ERA, our present system of chronology, is supposed to start from the birth of Our Lord. But Denis the Little, who worked out this system in the sixth century, made some error in his calculations. Jesus was certainly born before the death of Herod the Great, and that occurred not later than 3 B.C., probably in 4 B.C. Fr. Lagrange thinks Our Lord was born 'a few weeks, or at the most a few months, before Herod's death.' If, however, Sir W. Ramsay was right in the theory he put forward in 1897, namely that the enrolment which took Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem must have been held in 9-8 B.C. (8 B.C. with the last months of 9 B.C.), then most probably the Nativity took place within that period. The Westminster Version accepts this date. Fr. Lebreton says, 'Jesus was born at the latest in the year 5 B.C., and most probably in 7 or 8 B.C.' But St. Luke says that at the time of Jesus' baptism, which probably took place in A.D. 28, he was 'about thirty'. It is a moot point whether this could include 36 or 37.

Details of Our Lord's conception and birth are recorded in Matthew and Luke. In the former account, Joseph is the most prominent figure, in the latter Mary; but both accounts agree that Joseph had no share in Jesus' parentage, that the place of a human father was taken by the direct action of God the Holy Spirit, that Jesus' mother and sole human parent was a virgin, and that angelic messengers declared him to be the expected Messiah.

The series of angelic testimonies began with the announcement by the angel Gabriel to a Jewish priest named Zachary



that his wife Elizabeth, in spite of her advanced age, was about to bear him a son, who would be the forerunner or herald of the Messiah, as foretold by the prophet Malachy. Some 400 years earlier, God had announced through the mouth of Malachy: 'Behold, I send my messenger and he shall prepare the way before my face. And presently the Lord whom you seek . . . shall come to his temple. Behold he cometh, saith the Lord of hosts . . .' (3, 1), and again, 'Behold, I will send you Elias the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to their fathers . . .' (4, 5). Gabriel told Zachary that his son, who was to be called John ('God is gracious'), would 'be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb,' that he would live the life of an ascetic, that he would bring back many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God, and that he would 'go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to prepare for the Lord a ready people.'

Elizabeth did conceive, and six months later Gabriel appeared to her relative, Mary, who was living at Nazareth in Galilee, and was betrothed to a local carpenter, a descendant of David, named Joseph. 'Hail, full of grace,' said the angel to her, 'the Lord is with thee. . . . Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found favour before God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb and shalt bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus [Saviour]. He shall be great, and shall be called Son of the Most High; and the Lord God shall give him the throne of David his father, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his reign there shall be no end.' Mary then asked, 'How shall this be, seeing that I know not man?' From this question Catholic commentators draw

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the conclusion that Mary had no intention of consummating her marriage with Joseph, but intended, with his consent, to remain a consecrated virgin. The angel replied, 'The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the might of the Most High shall overshadow thee. Therefore the holy one to be begotten shall be called Son of God.' Lagrange and others translate the second sentence: 'Wherefore the child born [shall be] holy; he shall be called Son of God.' The phrase 'Son of God', like 'Son of the Most High' above, is used here without the definite article and would therefore be understood as 'a Son of God', i.e. one who is acceptable, well-pleasing, to God. Lagrange thinks it refers to Jesus being born by Divine action. The angel continued, 'And behold Elizabeth, thy kinswoman, she also hath conceived a son in her old age; she who was called barren is in her sixth month. For "naught shall be impossible with God."' Mary then expressed her submission to God's will, i.e. she consented to become a mother: 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word' (Luke 1, 26-38).

Some commentators see in the angel's words: 'The might of the Most High shall overshadow thee' a reference to the 'cloud' by which God used to manifest his presence in the original Temple and from which he spoke to the leaders of Israel. This Divine Presence, and consequently the Divine Glory, were called the *Shekinah* (literally, 'dwelling'), and St. John uses this very term in his Prologue when he writes: 'The Word was made flesh and *dwelt* amongst us, and we beheld his glory . . .' The same idea is perhaps implied in the many passages (especially in the fourth gospel) in which Christ is spoken of as 'light' and the source of light, phrases which were actually used of the *Shekinah*.

Shortly after the Annunciation, Mary went from Nazareth to visit Elizabeth, who lived in Judaea, and as she entered her



cousin's house, the latter felt a sudden movement within her womb, and at the same time was enlightened by the Holy Spirit as to its meaning. She therefore greeted Mary with the words, 'Blessed art thou among women, and blessed the fruit of thy womb! And whence this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come unto me? For behold, when the sound of thy salutation fell on mine ears, the babe in my womb leapt with gladness. And blessed art thou who hast believed, for what the Lord hath promised thee shall be accomplished.' Mary too was inspired to utter her canticle of the Magnificat, a hymn of praise to God for the sublime dignity bestowed on her, his lowly handmaid: 'Behold, henceforth all generations shall call me blessed'—a prophecy that has been strikingly fulfilled. The coming of Jesus, she says, is in fulfilment of God's merciful design, according to the promise which he made to Abraham. In other words, Jesus was the promised Messiah and Saviour.

When, in due course, John was born, his father Zachary was 'filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied [i.e. spoke as God's mouthpiece].' He too declared that the Messianic promise was now in course of fulfilment. 'The Lord God of Israel hath visited his people and wrought them redemption; and hath raised up the horn of salvation for us in the house of David his servant, as he promised . . .' Thus God was carrying out his merciful design, according to the covenant made with Abraham, 'to grant us that, delivered from the hand of enemies, we should serve without fear in holiness and justice before him, all our days.' Then, addressing his infant son, he said, 'Thou, my child, shalt be called prophet of the Most High, for thou shalt go before the Lord, to prepare his ways, to impart to his people knowledge of salvation through forgiveness of their sins, by reason of the loving mercy of our God wherewith he shall arise and visit us from on high, to

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shine upon them that sit in the darkness and shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace.' These canticles recorded by St. Luke not only explicitly declare Jesus to be the Messiah but they give unrivalled expression to the spiritual character of his mission, to which least attention had been paid by the Jews in general and to which in the event they were to show themselves blind.

Matthew tells us that Joseph, finding his betrothed with child, was for abandoning the marriage, but in such a way as to spare Mary as far as possible, and that he was told by an angel, who appeared to him in a dream, 'Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for what hath been begotten in her is from the Holy Spirit. She shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus [Saviour], for he shall save his people from their sins.'

Jesus was born at Bethlehem in Judaea, Mary having gone there with Joseph in connection with the enrolment mentioned above. 'It came to pass that whilst they were there she completed the days of her delivery and brought forth her first-born son; and she swathed him round and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.' Finding no place left in the *khan* or caravanserai, the weary travellers had taken shelter in a near-by cave that was used as a stable; there the Saviour of the world was born, and a manger or crib was his cradle.

The last angelic testimony was made to the shepherds at Bethlehem on the night of Jesus' Nativity, calling them to the manger: 'Fear not, for behold, I bring to you glad tidings of a great joy which shall be to all the people; for there hath been born to you this day a saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the town of David. And this shall be to you a sign thereof: ye shall find a babe enswathed and lying in a manger. . . . Glory to God in the highest, and peace upon earth among men of



his good pleasure.' In the more familiar 'men of good will', it is not man's good will towards God, but the unmerited love of God for man that is referred to. Mgr. Knox gives 'peace on earth to men that are God's friends', and a contemporary French translator (E. Osty) 'peace on earth to men whom God loves.'

On the eighth day, the infant Jesus was circumcised, according to the Mosaic Law, and some forty days after the Nativity Joseph and Mary took him to the Temple in Jerusalem 'to present him to the Lord' and to offer a sacrifice. The law required that non-Levite firstborn should be redeemed from the service of the Temple by the payment of five shekels, and that the mother should be 'purified' by a sacrifice. While these ritual requirements were complied with, it is the 'presentation to the Lord' that is stressed in the sacred narrative. In his *Gospel of the Infancy*, Fr. Eric Burrows, S.J., argues that the inspired writer 'has converted the meaning of the rite (in the case of Jesus) from redemption from service into dedication to service. Ritually the Infant Christ was redeemed, but in idea and spirit he was offered to the Lord like the Levites. . . . Luke has reduced the whole ceremony to a presentation and a sacrifice accompanying the presentation.' Not that this was understood at the time by Joseph and Mary, who were merely complying with the Law. Thus, they 'marvelled' when the aged Simeon took the child in his arms 'and, blessing God, sang of the new "salvation", "light" and "glory" that had appeared', and foretold that this sign from heaven would be contradicted, and that Mary's own soul would be pierced. 'The inspired saint reveals the spiritual meaning of what has been done. The presentation of this Child is a prelude to the future sacrifice, in which the Mother will be a fellow-victim' (Burrows).

Simeon had been inspired to stress the universal character

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of the Saviour's mission; he was 'a light of revelation unto the gentiles'—by which term all non-Jews were designated. This saying received factual confirmation soon afterwards, when, as Matthew records, 'Magi from the East' arrived in Jerusalem in search of a newly-born King of the Jews. 'We have seen his star in the East, and are come to worship him,' they said, and they had brought gifts: gold, frankincense and myrrh. King Herod consulted Jewish priests and scribes and learned from them that the prophet Micheas (seventh century B.C.) had designated Bethlehem as the birthplace of the future Messiah. As the Magi followed this direction, 'the star which they had seen in the East went before them till it came and stood over where the child was.' These 'Magi'—their number is not given—were Gentile astrologers, and they probably came from the country beyond the Dead Sea. They may have been vaguely familiar with the Jewish expectation of a Messiah, and had taken the appearance of a new star, perhaps a comet, or more probably a miraculous meteor, as a portent of its imminent realization. Their visit marked the fact that the coming of the Saviour was the concern not only of the Jews but also of the Gentile world.

Herod had cunningly asked the Magi to return to give him news of the whereabouts of the newly-born King, 'that I too may come and worship him.' His intention was very different, and when the Magi, instructed by an angel, did not return to the king, he 'sent and slew all the male children in Bethlehem and in all the borders thereof that were two years old and under.' Joseph, however, had previously been warned by God's angel in a dream to 'take the child and his mother and flee into Egypt,' and so the life of the infant Jesus was saved.

Bishop Le Camus, and more recently Fr. Eric Burrows (op. cit.), places the adoration of the Magi before the Presentation in the Temple and the flight into Egypt after it.



The former writes, 'The Magi having gone to Jerusalem, we see why Simeon's hopes revived. The scene of the Purification being noised abroad, the anxiety and fury of Herod are also understood.' Fr. Burrows thinks that in his canticle Simeon 'made a definite reference to a notable recent event—Simeon thanked God that he too had been permitted to see what had been revealed to the gentile Magi.' Lagrange, Lebreton and Prat place the events in the order we have followed.

When assembled together, these early testimonies to Christ's Messiahship are so explicit and emphatic that it may be wondered how they escaped public attention at the time. But knowledge of them was confined to a very small and humble circle; indeed, only Joseph and Mary could have known them all. Mary, says Luke, 'stored up all these things in her heart' and she was no doubt the chief source, directly or indirectly, of his information. When the Holy Family returned from Egypt, some time after 4 B.C., it was to Nazareth, where they were accepted by their neighbours as a normal family: father, mother, and son.

When the Gospels were eventually written and the above facts became more widely known, there were not wanting adversaries who spoke scornfully of mythical heroes and wonderful tales of their supernatural birth. But, unlike the myths, these are facts vouched for by eyewitnesses and recorded in contemporary documents. Moreover, the virgin birth of Our Lord in particular was not just a way of showing his importance; it had its part in his mission. This may have been indicated by the angel Gabriel, when, after announcing that Jesus was to be born of Mary by the direct action of God, he said, according to some translators, 'Wherefore that which is to be born shall be holy, he shall be called Son of God,' a reason which becomes clearer in the light of St. Paul's

### *The Birth of the Messiah*

doctrine of original sin and the second Adam. Fr. Durand, s.j., in his book on *The Childhood of Jesus Christ*, says: 'Rigorously speaking, we can suppose a sinless Christ, sanctified from his mother's womb, who, however, would have been conceived and born just like other men. But it must be confessed that this hypothesis hardly agrees with the train of thought found all through the system of St. Paul. St. Irenaeus was struck by the comparison the Apostle draws between the first and the second Adam, and concludes that, just as the former was drawn from a virgin earth, so the latter must have been born of a Virgin Mother.' Pope St. Leo the Great said in a Christmas sermon, 'Jesus Christ was conceived by a Virgin, born of a Virgin . . . because such an origin was fitting for the future Saviour of men who should possess in himself the nature of a human being but without experiencing the corruptions of human flesh.' Dr. Sanday, in his *Outlines of the Life of Christ*, gives a modern turn to the argument: 'Jesus was to live and move amongst men, and was to be made in all points like his brethren, with the one difference that he was to be—unlike them—without sin. But how was a sinless human nature possible? To speak of a sinless human nature is to speak of something essentially outside the continuity of the species. The growth of self-conscious experience, expressed at its finest and best in the formulae of advancing science, has emphasized the strength of heredity. Each generation is bound to the last by indissoluble ties. To sever the bond, in any one of its colligated strands, involves a break in descent. It involves the introduction of a new factor, to which the taint of sin does not attach.'

'And the child grew and waxed strong, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him' (L. 3, 52). As a human being, the child developed both physically and mentally. To the onlookers there was nothing extraordinary about his



life. Nevertheless, a divine grace shone forth in the words and actions of the little boy, and marked him out as one specially favoured by God. When he was twelve years old, there occurred a notable episode, the occasion of Jesus' first recorded utterance. Having accompanied Joseph and Mary to Jerusalem for the Passover, he came to be left behind and was only found after three days' search. 'They found him in the temple, seated in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. And all that heard him were amazed at his intelligence and his answers.' Mary's question shows how normal their family relations were, 'My child, why hast thou done so to us? Behold, thy father and I seek thee sorrowing.' The boy replied:

How is it that ye sought me? Knew ye not that I must needs be in my Father's house? (L. 2, 49).

The idiomatic phrase is literally 'in the things which are my Father's,' and some translate: 'about my Father's business.' The saying clearly reveals the speaker's awareness both of a special relationship between himself and God—throughout his life he will speak of him as '*my* Father', whereas to others He is '*our* Father'—and of his special dedication to God's service. Nor perhaps is this all that it reveals. We are told that Joseph and Mary 'understood not the word which he spoke to them.' Fr. Burrows proposes this explanation (op. cit.): 'The reason why Joseph and Mary did not understand the saying is simply, I think, that it was not fully intelligible. It was a reference to the dedication in the Temple twelve years before, which was a mystery, unknown to the parents, but of which Jesus was conscious. It has been a real difficulty that Jesus seems to greet his Mother with what sounds like a rebuke. But if the saying belongs to a mystery, it cannot be judged in an ordinary way. 'Did you not know? And it was

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you yourselves who dedicated me to my Father's house. And yet how could you know? The presentation was a mystery, and you thought it was the custom of the Law.' This is the irony of a supernatural person, half pitiful and half gay—not rebuke.' Nevertheless, Jesus promptly submitted to their will: 'he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them.' (cf. Chap. 2: Miracle at Cana).

And Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature, and in favour both with God and with men. As in childhood, so too in youth he experienced a normal human development. Theologians distinguish between (1) Jesus' omniscience as God, (2) his supernatural or infused knowledge, such as he had perhaps manifested when discovered in the Temple, and (3) the knowledge which he acquired in a normal human way. We know too from the gospels that this growth in experience was accompanied by normal human emotions, wonder, pity, indignation, grief, etc. Like other boys, he will have studied the Jewish Scriptures; nor, as later utterances reveal, did he fail to gather lessons from the book of nature.

So, until he was 'about thirty' (L. 3, 23), Jesus remained in the seclusion of a carpenter's life at Nazareth. As there is no further mention of Joseph, it is assumed that he died during this period, and Jesus himself will later be referred to as 'the carpenter' and 'the son of Mary' by his neighbours at Nazareth: 'Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James and Joses and Jude and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?' (Mk. 6, 3). These 'brothers' and 'sisters' were certainly not children of Mary. That the mother of Jesus remained a virgin is evident from the title given to her by the Church from earliest times, e.g. in the Apostles' Creed. If she had had a family by Joseph, it is incredible that the Early Church would have known her as 'the Virgin Mary'. And her perpetual virginity has been the constant teaching of



the Church ever since. The subsequent conduct of the 'brothers of the Lord'—their scornful tone towards Jesus and high-handed methods (J. 7, 3; Mk. 3, 21)—strongly suggests that they were senior to him in age, which also goes to show that they were not Mary's children. And finally, the fact that on the Cross, Jesus entrusted his mother to one who was not a relative, the disciple John, and bade him be a son to her, is additional proof that she had no other sons to look after her. Several of the early Fathers assumed that these 'brothers' and 'sisters' of Jesus were children of Joseph by a former marriage, but this view was opposed in the fourth century by St. Jerome, who first taught that Joseph too must have been a virgin. His opinion regarding Joseph prevailed in the Western Church and is now accepted by all Catholics, 'but no theologian ever claimed it was a dogma, nor even a doctrine that was to be defined' (Durand, *op. cit.*). It is generally explained that Our Lord's 'brothers and sisters' were nephews and nieces either of Joseph or of Mary. In the Book of Genesis, Abraham and Lot are frequently called 'brothers', although they were really uncle and nephew; and to this day Eastern usage is not at all precise in employing terms of relationship.

## CHAPTER 2

### BEGINNING OF PUBLIC LIFE

#### *Chronology*

OUR LORD'S BAPTISM, temptation and first miracle all took place in the months immediately preceding the first Passover of his public ministry. At a later Passover he was crucified. Biblical experts are not agreed as to whether no other Passover, or one, or two, intervened between the first and the last. Nor are they agreed as to the exact dates of the first and the last Passover, although they only differ from one another by a year or two. We are following the chronology adopted by Fr. Lagrange, Mgr. Barton, Fr. Lebreton and Fr. Sutcliffe, who place the first Passover in A.D. 28 and the last in A.D. 30, with one other Passover intervening therefore. According to this theory, the duration of Our Lord's public ministry was two years and a few months.

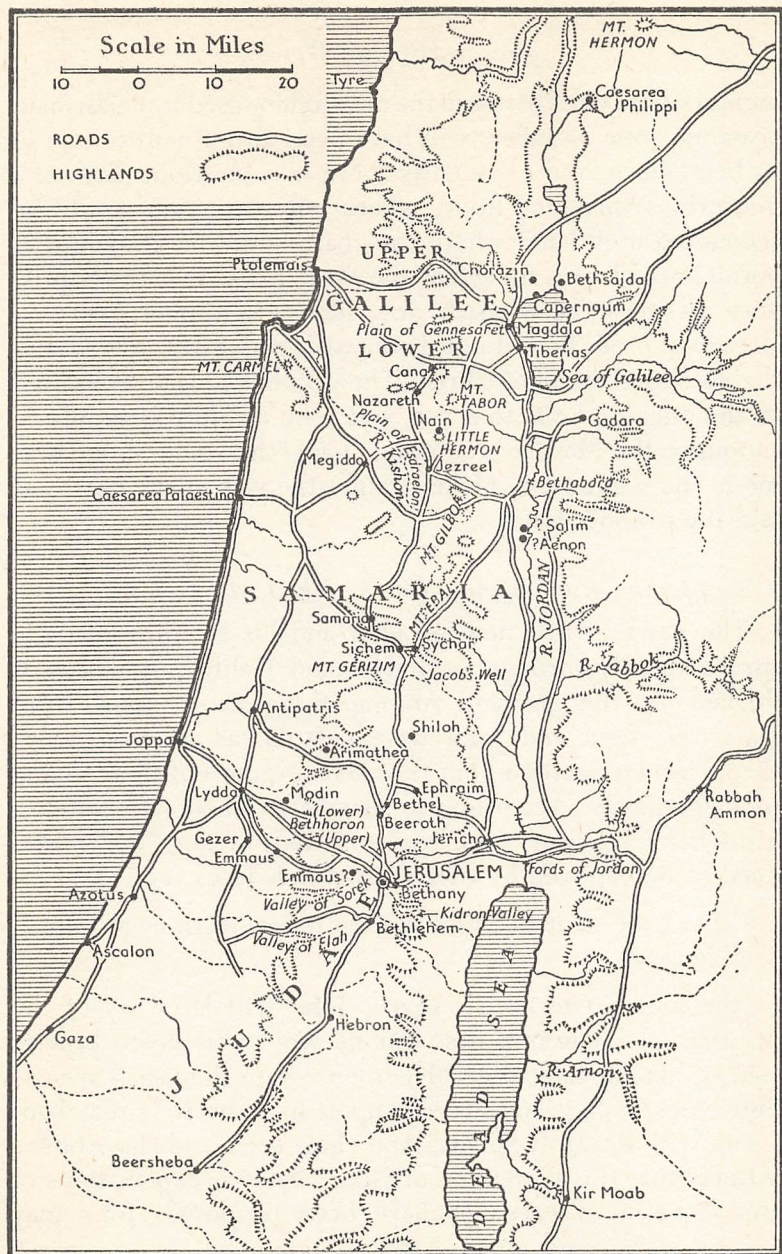
A.D. 27. *Banks of Jordan. The Forerunner* (M. 3; Mk. 1; L. 3; J. 1)

At what age John, the son of Zachary and Elizabeth, retired to the desert of Judaea we are not told, but his life there fulfilled the angel's prophecy that he would be an ascetic. It also corresponded to the popular idea of a 'holy man' and a prophet. Eventually, like the prophets of old, he was inspired to deliver a message from God to his people. According to St. Luke and his commentators, it was in A.D. 27 that 'the word of the Lord came unto John, the son of Zachary, in the wilderness. And he went into all the neighbourhood of the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance



unto forgiveness of sins.' The Jews were accustomed to repeated ceremonial washings, signifying purification, but this baptism was a solemn act, performed only once, and signified the penitent's desire to be rid of the past, with its guilt, and to live henceforward for God. The reason John gave for this peremptory call to repentance was that 'the kingdom (or reign) of God is at hand.' To the Jews this could only have one meaning, namely, that their traditional expectation was on the point of being realized, that the Messiah would shortly appear and inaugurate the reign of God on earth. Some indeed wondered whether John himself were not the Messiah, but he told them, 'After me cometh he who is mightier than I. . . . I have baptized you with water unto repentance, but he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing-fan is in his hand, and he will clean out his threshing floor; he will gather his wheat into the barn, but will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.'

The baptism of the Forerunner was a sign of repentance or change of heart, but only the Messiah himself could give the Holy Spirit, whose sanctifying action John compares to fire. Those who were not purified by that fire would become fuel for another fire, like that which burns up chaff. A modern biographer of the Baptist, with experience of Palestine, Père Denis Buzy, explains the metaphor of the threshing floor. Sheaves of wheat, barley or maize are laid on the threshing floor and trodden over by oxen until the grain is separated from the ears and lies in heaps mixed with chaff. As soon as a suitable breeze springs up, the winnowing fan (a wooden fork with two or three prongs) is plunged into the heaps and each forkful is shaken to and fro in the breeze, with the result that the heavier grain falls to the ground while the chaff is carried a short distance by the wind. When this operation is completed, the floor is said to be cleansed. 'From time im-



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memorial the chaff has been the only fodder used by Palestinian peasants. John's hearers will have been astonished to hear of its being burned up. Evidently there was question, then, of a mysterious threshing floor, where only the grain would be accounted useful and where the chaff would be destroyed as pernicious.' It was indeed as the Final Judge that the Baptist here pictured the Messiah, for, like the prophet Malachy, already quoted, he did not distinguish between the First and the Second Coming of Christ. The prophet's vision is limited to the purpose he is to serve, and John's rôle was simply to announce the Messiah's coming: 'I am "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord", as said the prophet Isaiah.'

*A.D. 28. Jan. Jesus' Baptism (M. 3; Mk. 1; L. 3; J. 1)*

The news of this new prophet and his startling message spread rapidly throughout Judaea and Galilee, and crowds flocked to the Jordan. Among them came Jesus from Nazareth. Jesus and John were related, as we have seen, through their mothers, but there is no record of their having met previously. According to Matthew, when Jesus offered himself for baptism, John remonstrated, saying, 'It is I who need to be baptized by thee.' To which Jesus replied,

Let it be so at this time; for so it becometh us to fulfil all justness.

In the fourth Gospel, however, John will later say of the Messiah, 'I knew him not, but he who sent me to baptize with water, he said to me "He upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and abiding upon him, he it is that baptizeth with the Holy Spirit." And I have seen, and I have borne witness that this is the Son of God.' Various explanations of this apparent discrepancy have been proposed. John may

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have had good reason for thinking Jesus was the Messiah, and yet have had to await the appointed sign before giving his public testimony. The Westminster Version uses the word 'justness' for the 'justice' of the Douay version. 'Justice' is ambiguous to modern readers for, as used in Scripture, it means not the cardinal virtue of justice but the state of being just (i.e. holy, righteous, acceptable to God). 'To fulfil all justness' means 'to win God's acceptance in every way we can' (Knox), 'to leave nothing undone which God has shown to be His will' (Sanday).

So Jesus was baptized by John, and coming up out of the water, as he stood there praying, he had a vision of the heavens being opened, and the Holy Spirit descending as a dove, while a voice from heaven said, 'Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.' Instead of 'my beloved Son', Mgr. Barton and others prefer the reading 'my only Son', arguing that both in classical and Septuagint usage the Greek word *agapetos* means 'only' when used as it is here, for example, throughout the Septuagint version of the story of Abraham and Isaac: 'Take thy only son. . . . Thou hast not spared thy only son. . . .' (Genesis 22). This translation would also remove what looks like repetition in the usual version: 'beloved . . . well pleased . . . .'

The first three Gospels state that the vision was given to Jesus; the fourth Gospel says that it was shared by the Baptist: 'I have seen the Spirit coming down as a dove from heaven, and it abode upon him . . . and I have borne witness that this is the Son of God.' This is the first time Jesus is spoken of as '*the* Son of God', but several MSS. have here 'the Elect of God', and Lagrange thinks that is the original text. Some non-Catholic writers have suggested that Jesus only became conscious that he was the Messiah at his baptism. But, as we have seen, he probably displayed his awareness of this when he



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was twelve years old, and no doubt he was conscious of his Messianic character from the first awakening of his human consciousness. All we can say, then, is that 'it was above all to Jesus himself that the heavenly voice was addressed' (Lebreton), and that the vision marked a definite stage in his human life. From the baptism he went forth, 'filled with the Holy Spirit' (L.), to begin the work for which he had come into the world, namely of recalling God's banished children to their heavenly Father and restoring them to his favour, a task particularly appropriate to the true Son of God. Fr. Lagrange says: 'It is to give him the signal to begin that the Spirit comes down from heaven.' Dr. Sanday says: 'The descent of the Spirit took the place with Jesus of 'the anointing' which marked the assumption of the active work to which they were called by the kings and prophets of old. The events of the Baptism were at the same time a Divine authentication of Jesus's mission.' It was fitting that this tremendous moment should have been marked by the first solemn manifestation of the Divine Trinity. The Baptism also illustrates the spiritual truth often taught by Jesus, that those who humble themselves will be exalted. Jesus identified himself with his sinful fellow-men, and God proclaimed his sinlessness: 'in thee I am well pleased'.

*A.D. 28. Feb. Desert of Judaea. The Forty Days (M. 4; Mk. 1; L. 4)*

Immediately after the above events, Jesus was moved by the Holy Spirit to retire alone into the wild solitudes near the Jordan, and there to pass forty days and forty nights in prayer and complete abstinence from food. After just mentioning these facts, the Gospels pass on to the Temptation, but this prolonged 'retreat' of Jesus is worth considering in itself. We are told in other places of him praying, going apart alone in order to pray, retiring into some solitude to pray. The

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psychology of a God-man is something that baffles us, but as One who was truly man Jesus prayed and underwent intense spiritual experience, as he must have done during these forty days and forty nights. Incidentally, the rain that caused the Flood fell for forty days and forty nights, Moses spent forty days and forty nights in prayer on Mount Sinai before receiving the Ten Commandments, and Elias, after being fed by an angel in the desert 'walked in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights unto the mount of God, Horeb.' Jesus too underwent mysterious spiritual experiences during the prayer which was an essential part of his life as man. Later he will tell his disciples that it is only through prayer that they can obtain the spiritual power to cast out devils (cf. Chap. 5: Cure of Possessed Epileptic).

*A.D. 28. Feb. The Temptation (M. 4; Mk. 1; L. 4)*

The first recorded temptation took place towards the end of the forty days when Jesus was in a state of extreme physical weakness resulting from his long fast. It took the form of the suggestion: 'If thou art a Son of God [i.e. a person singularly pleasing to God] command that these stones become loaves of bread.' Jesus replied:

It is written, 'Not by bread alone shall man live, but by every word that cometh from the mouth of God'.

When the Israelites cried out for food in the desert, God fed them with manna 'to show that not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God' (Deut. 8, 3), i.e. that his creative word is able to provide for human needs. Jesus' reply therefore meant that we must trust God's Providence to supply our needs.

Jesus next felt himself transported to Jerusalem and placed



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on a pinnacle of the Temple. 'If thou art a Son of God,' urged the tempter, 'cast thyself down . . .' Jesus replied:

Again it is written, 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God [as we say, "tempt Providence"]'.

Finally, the devil took Jesus to a mountain top from which he could see 'all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them' and offered him dominion over them all if he would acknowledge him, Satan, as his master. Jesus replied:

Begone Satan; for it is written, 'The Lord thy God shalt thou worship and him alone shalt thou serve'.

Then the devil left him, and angels ministered to his needs. When nearing the end of his public life, Jesus will again undergo a mysterious spiritual experience, in the course of which an angel will come to strengthen him (cf. Chap. 9: Agony in Gethsemane).

Jesus himself must have related the above temptations to his disciples, and the reason may well have been because the principles he asserted in repelling them were principles which he was consistently to maintain throughout his ministry. (1) He would never use his Divine powers for his own personal benefit. Being solely concerned to do his Father's will, he was ready to endure whatever that entailed, whether it were hunger or even a violent and disgraceful death. (2) He would not use his Divine powers to gain a cheap success as a wonder-worker. Miracles were to play an important part in his mission, but their purpose was to awaken or foster faith in himself and change men's hearts. Where there was no likelihood of a spiritual result, he would perform no miraculous cures. (3) It was no earthly empire that he had come to establish. That indeed was what most of the Jews had come to expect of the Messiah. All through his ministry these worldly ambitions will continue to prevent his hearers from under-

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standing the spiritual transformation which was to be of the essence of the new 'kingdom of God'.

*A.D. 28. March. East of Jordan. First Disciples (J. 1)*

After his stay in the desert, Jesus rejoined the company gathered round John the Baptist, who was now at 'Bethany beyond the Jordan'. The site of this village is not known. John had been speaking publicly of Jesus as the Messiah and now when he saw him he said to those with him, 'Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world!' At first sight, these words are surprising in the mouth of the Baptist because they seem to imply a fuller knowledge of Our Lord's purpose than his other utterances reveal. It is unlikely that he envisaged the Messiah suffering and dying for the sins of the world. Probably, therefore, it was not of the Paschal Lamb or the expiation offered in person by the Suffering Servant in the prophecy of Isaiah that the Baptist was thinking, but rather of Jesus' sinlessness and his mission of doing away with sin. As to the precise means by which Jesus would accomplish this, John the Baptist, like the rest of the Jews, was still in the dark.

On the following day, John again met Jesus and said to two of his disciples who were with him, 'Behold the Lamb of God'. The two disciples then followed Jesus, who turned and said to them:

What seek ye?

'Master,' they replied, 'where abidest thou?' Jesus said:

Come, and ye shall see.

So they went and remained with him the whole day. One of them was Andrew, from Bethsaida in Galilee, and he brought his brother, Simon, telling him, 'We have found the Messiah'.



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Jesus, when he saw Simon, 'looked closely' at him and said,

Thou art Simon the son of John; thou shalt be called  
Kephas.

The Aramaic word *Kepha* means 'rock', and its Greek equivalent is *petra*, but as this is a feminine word the Greek writer uses the masculine *petros* (Peter). Henceforward Simon is always spoken of as Simon Peter, or simply Peter (cf. Chap. 5: Peter's Profession of Faith). Another who made Jesus' acquaintance at this time was Philip, also from Bethsaida, and Jesus bade him:

Follow me.

Philip told his friend Nathanael that here at last was the Messiah, 'Jesus from Nazareth, the son of Joseph', but Nathanael, who came from the neighbouring village of Cana, retorted, 'Can anything good be from Nazareth?' However he went along with Philip, and Jesus greeted him with the words:

Behold a true Israelite, in whom there is no guile.

'Whence dost thou know me?' asked Nathanael. Jesus replied,

Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee.

These words evidently had a meaning for Nathanael which is hidden from us, because he at once exclaimed, 'Master, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel.' In other words, he acknowledged him as the Messiah; it is clear from the context that Nathanael did not mean more than this. Jesus then said,

Because I said to thee, 'I saw thee under the fig-tree', thou believest. Greater things than these shalt thou see. Amen, amen, I say to you: ye shall see the heaven opened

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and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.

Jesus was alluding to the dream of Jacob related in Genesis (28, 12), in which he saw 'a ladder standing upon the earth and the top thereof touching heaven, the angels also of God ascending and descending by it'. So the disciples would come to perceive that heaven was now opened and God's angels actively engaged in the cause of Christ. Nathanael, by the way, is identified by some writers with the apostle Bartholomew, because Philip and Bartholomew are always put together in the list of the Twelve.

#### *'The Son of Man'*

In his conversation with Nathanael, Jesus applied to himself the title for which he would show a marked preference throughout his public ministry: 'Son of Man'. The meanings which Our Lord expressed by this title will appear from his own use of it. In its Aramaic equivalent, it signified primarily Man, i.e. the human race, mankind. Thus the Psalmist says to God: 'What is man that thou shouldst be mindful of him, or the son of man that thou shouldst regard him? Yet hast thou made him but little lower than God. Thou settest him over the works of thy hands, thou hast put all things beneath his feet' (Ps. 8, trs. C. Lattey). St. Paul more than once applied the last verse to Jesus Christ, the 'Son of Man' *par excellence* (1 Cor. 15, 26; Eph. 1, 22; Heb. 2, 8). In the Book of Daniel also 'son of man' is used as a synonym for man, e.g. it is applied to the prophet himself. But in one of his visions the prophet saw four world empires represented by beasts, while the kingdom of God's saints was represented by 'one like the son of man', i.e. a man, to whom God, visualized by the prophet as the Ancient of days, 'gave power and glory and a



### *Jesus in His Own Words*

kingdom; and all peoples, tribes and tongues shall serve him. His power is an everlasting power that shall not be taken away: and his kingdom that shall not be destroyed.' Later, in the apocryphal 'Parables of Henoch', composed before 60 B.C. and evidently inspired by the above vision of Daniel, the 'Son of Man' became definitely an individual, the Elect One, the Anointed One, a pre-existent, superhuman being, who would be 'a staff for the just, the light of the Gentiles, the hope of those who suffer at heart'. In effect, he was identified with the Messiah. This work had a great vogue among the early Christians, and is quoted in the Epistle of St. Jude. But to what extent it influenced Our Lord's contemporaries is not known. At any rate, 'Son of Man' does not seem to have been a common title for the Messiah, and Our Lord's use of it will not have been immediately understood as a claim to Messiahship. That may have been a reason for his using it. Current Jewish ideas about the Messiah and his kingdom were worldly and materialistic, and Jesus had first to wean them from these ideas and give them a new conception, more moral, more spiritual, of the coming kingdom, before he could hope to make them understand the part which he himself was to play in it. So he began his ministry by preaching the kingdom of God, calling himself meanwhile by a title which emphasized his 'brotherhood with toiling and struggling humanity' (Sanday) and was at the same time Messianic, but not too evidently so.

#### *A.D. 28. March. Cana in Galilee. First Miracle (J. 2)*

Jesus only stayed a day or two with John, and then took the road which followed the Jordan northwards as far as the Lake, accompanied by the little group of Galileans who had already attached themselves to him. These went on with him to Cana, the next village to Nazareth, where Jesus and his

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mother had been invited to be present at a marriage. During the marriage feast the supply of wine ran short. Mary said to Jesus, 'They have no wine,' and her manner must have suggested that he might remedy the deficiency, for he replied:

What have I to do with thee, O woman? My hour is not yet come.

No other saying of Our Lord's has been so much discussed or so variously explained as this one. The first idiom, literally 'What is to me and to thee?', is the same as that used twice by demoniacs when they said to Jesus, 'What have we to do with thee?' An equivalent Hebrew idiom occurs six times in the Old Testament and always expresses remonstrance. But the meaning here is linked with what follows. The phrase, Jesus' 'hour', occurs seven or eight times in this Gospel and in each of the other cases refers to his Passion. It would seem, then, that we have here an enigmatic saying, with a double meaning, the one relating to what Jesus was then about to do, the other to something connected with his Passion.

Fr. Eric Burrows (op. cit.) finds a marked Johannean influence in the Gospel of the Childhood—it may have come to Luke from Mary through John—and makes an illuminating comparison between the above saying and Our Lord's reply to Mary and Joseph when they found him in the Temple. In the earlier episode, 'Mary complains that Jesus has left His parents. He seems to answer that He is not subject to His earthly parents and that His home is the house of God; then immediately, as the narrative suggests, He leaves the house of God and subjects himself to His parents. An exactly analogous sequence, point for point, occurs in the first scene of the ministry of John. Mary suggests a miracle. Jesus seems to answer that she cannot influence His action, and that His hour has not yet come; then immediately, or as quickly as



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possible, He performs the miracle as requested.' In each case, the initial expression of detachment 'should have, not the obvious meaning suggested by the actual circumstances, but a symbolic meaning, suggested by what the circumstances symbolized. . . . We require, therefore, an event (1) which could be symbolized by a gift of miraculous wine, (2) which occurred at the time of the Passion, (3) in regard to which the saying "What is to me and to thee" would be relevant. The institution of the Eucharist satisfies the three requirements perfectly. Comment is only needed on (3). The words in question contain the doctrine of Jn. 6 [cf. Chap. 4: Sermon on the Bread of Life], where it is insisted upon that the (Eucharistic) Flesh and Blood belong to one who descended from heaven—whereas the Jews say "whose father and mother we know"—and vivify by virtue of the Spirit.' This explanation may appear over-subtle but it meets all the difficulties which this passage raises. Both the miracle at Cana and that of the multiplication of loaves prefigure and prepare the way for the institution of the Holy Eucharist.

Mary, at any rate, did not take Jesus' reply as a refusal, for she turned to the servants and bade them do whatever he should order. Jesus then pointed to six water pots that were set there, and said:

Fill the jars with water.

When this had been done, he said:

Draw now, and take to the chief steward.

The Gospel narrative clearly implies that the water in all the jars was turned into wine, for it mentions that they held between two and three firkins apiece. A firkin was about nine gallons, so the total amount was over 100 gallons. It is

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also mentioned that the wine was of the best kind used on such occasions.

*A.D. 28. March. Jerusalem. First Passover (J. 2; M. 21; Mk. 11; L. 19)*

We next read of Jesus going down to Capharnaum, and a few days later taking the road to Jerusalem for the approaching Passover. Some disciples accompanied him. It was customary for a teacher of repute to be the centre of a group of followers, more or less loosely attached to him. Pilgrims from Galilee to Jerusalem went by the Jordan valley as far as Jericho if they wished to avoid passing through hostile Samaria, but most of them preferred the shorter route.

At Jerusalem, according to the fourth Gospel, Jesus began his ministry by making a striking public protest against a typical abuse of the time. The sacred precincts of the Temple were filled with commotion caused by vendors of oxen, sheep and doves for the sacrifices, and money-changers doing business with pilgrims, who had come from all quarters for the Passover. Aflame with holy indignation, Jesus, single-handed, drove them all out of the Temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and he scattered the money of the changers and upset their tables, and to them who sold the doves he said,

Take them away! Make not of the house of my Father a house of traffic [a place of barter].

The first three Gospels place this episode, or an exact repetition of it, in the last week of Our Lord's life. As reported by them, his words were:

It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer (for all the nations—Mk.)'; but ye are making it 'a den of thieves' [quotations from Isaiah and Jeremiah].



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To return to the fourth Gospel, the Jews asked him, 'What sign dost thou show us, seeing that thou dost these things?' Jesus replied:

Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

Whereupon they exclaimed, 'This temple took forty-six years to build; wilt thou raise it up in three days?' But the temple Jesus was speaking of was his own body, says the evangelist. Incidentally, the Jews' remark helps to fix the date of this Passover. Herod the Great began rebuilding the Temple in 20-19 B.C. Commentators calculate that this must therefore be the Passover of A.D. 28. The Temple was not completed until A.D. 62, and eight years later it was destroyed by the Romans.

#### *Conversation with Nicodemus (J. 2)*

At Jerusalem, continues John the Evangelist, many came to believe in Jesus after seeing the miracles he did, but, knowing men as he did, Jesus did not give them his confidence. He made an exception, however, in the case of Nicodemus. This was a Pharisee and a member of the Sanhedrin who sought Jesus out privately, by night, and addressed him respectfully, 'Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs which thou dost unless God be with him.' Jesus recognized his sincerity by speaking freely to him of the interior transformation which was an essential part of becoming a member of the new kingdom of God.

Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God. . . . Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born of water and Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

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Do not wonder that I have said to thee, 'Ye must be born from above'. The wind bloweth whither it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh or whither it goeth; so it is with every one that is born of the Spirit.

This means that in those who have been reborn we can see the working of the Holy Spirit, although we cannot see the Spirit. Nicodemus asked, 'How can these things come to pass?' Jesus replied:

Art thou the teacher of Israel, and understandest not these things? Amen, amen, I say to thee, we speak what we know, and bear witness of what we have seen, and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you things heavenly?

Cardinal Mercier paraphrases the last sentence: 'I have taught you the mystery (of the supernatural life) only in the measure in which it is realized upon earth, and you refuse to believe in it; how could you make up your mind to believe, were I to speak to you of the accomplishment of this mystery in heaven.'

It is not certain whether the next words are part of Our Lord's discourse or a comment of the evangelist:

No one hath gone up into heaven but he who hath come down from heaven, the Son of Man [some MSS. add: who is in heaven]. As Moses raised up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be raised up, that whosoever believeth in him may have everlasting life.

The rest is probably a reflection of the evangelist: 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him may not perish, but may have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to



judge the world, but that the world might be saved through him. He that believeth in him is not judged; he that believeth not is already judged, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. Now herein is the judgment, that whereas the light is come into the world, men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil. Every one that doth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, lest his works be convicted; but he that doth the truth cometh to the light, in order that his works may be seen clearly to have been wrought in God' (cf. Chap. 6: Cure of Man Born Blind).

Some commentators point out that the precautions taken by Nicodemus as well as certain of Our Lord's remarks to him would come more naturally at a later stage of the public life, and it is noteworthy that the first compiler of a harmony of the Gospels (about A.D. 180), Tatian, identified the whole of this visit to Jerusalem with that of the last Passover. This earlier visit is not mentioned in the first three Gospels, and they put the cleansing of the Temple on Palm Sunday.

*A.D. 28. April. Aenon. The Baptist and Jesus (J. 3)*

On leaving Jerusalem, Jesus and his followers travelled northwards to Aenon, near Salim, where John the Baptist was then preaching. Jesus began his ministry at the point where John was to stop, namely by announcing the imminent coming of 'the kingdom of God' and preaching the baptism of repentance, as practised by John. Jesus himself, we are told, did not baptize, but his disciples did. Their success caused some jealousy among John's disciples, but the Baptist said to them, 'No one can receive anything unless it be given him from heaven. Ye bear me witness yourselves that I said, "I am not the Christ, but am sent before him". He who hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom,

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who standeth and heareth him, with joy rejoiceth at the bridegroom's voice. This therefore my joy is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease.' The Messiah had been depicted as a bridegroom in Psalm 44 and in the prophecies of Osee and Malachy, and Jesus will speak of himself as 'the bridegroom' (cf. Chap. 3: A Question of Fasting).

What follows is probably a comment of St. John the Evangelist: 'He that cometh from above is above all; he that is from the earth is from the earth, and from the earth he speaketh. He that cometh from heaven is above all; he beareth witness of what he hath seen and heard, and his witness no one receiveth. He who receiveth his witness hath set his seal to this, that God is true. For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God; for he giveth not the Spirit by measure. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that believeth in the Son hath everlasting life; he that obeyeth not [refuses to believe in] the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remaineth upon him.'

Soon after this, John was arrested by emissaries of the Tetrarch of Galilee and Peraea, Herod Antipas (son of the Herod who massacred the Innocents) and, according to Josephus, was taken to the solitary fortress of Machaerus, in the mountains beyond the Dead Sea. His removal would have been a relief to the Jewish leaders but for the news which reached them that crowds were now flocking to Jesus. Perhaps to avoid trouble with them, Jesus returned to Galilee.

#### *A.D. 28. May. Samaria. The Woman at Jacob's Well (J. 4)*

The party travelled through Samaria, and at Jacob's Well, near the town of Sychar, Jesus had a conversation with a Samaritan woman. Being tired after the journey, he was resting at the well, while his disciples had gone into the town to



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buy food. This woman came to draw water, and Jesus opened the conversation by saying to her,

Give me to drink.

The woman expressed surprise at a Jew making such a request of a Samaritan. Jesus then said:

If thou didst know the gift of God, and who he is that saith to thee, 'Give me to drink', thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. . . . Every one that drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a fountain of water springing up unto everlasting life.

The phrase 'living water' was commonly used for running water as contrasted with water in a cistern. Jesus explains his phrase by saying that 'he who drinks of *his* water will thirst no more because he will have the spring within himself, a spring that begins to flow during this life and goes on flowing still in that eternal life to which the power of this water will lead him' (Lagrange). The dialogue continued; we give Jesus' words:

Go, call thy husband and come hither. . . . Thou hast said rightly, 'I have no husband'; for thou hast had five husbands, and now he whom thou hast is not thy husband. This hast thou said truly. . . . Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when neither on this mountain [Gerizim] nor at Jerusalem shall ye worship the Father. Ye [Samaritans] worship that which ye know not; we worship that which we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour cometh and now is, when true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth. For indeed the Father seeketh such worshippers. God is a spirit: and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

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The privileged position held by the Temple at Jerusalem was about to end. Men were to learn through Jesus that true worship must come from mind and heart, and that this interior worship was not limited to any particular time or place but should pervade the whole of one's life. Since God is a spirit, He looks for the homage of man's spirit, the homage of adhesion to Divine truth and perfect sincerity. 'I know,' said the woman, 'that Messiah is coming (that is, Christ); when he cometh, he shall declare unto us all things.' Jesus said to her:

I that speak with thee am he.

The disciples, returning, 'wondered that he was speaking with a woman,' but they did not dare to question his conduct. It was not only that she was a Samaritan, but the idea of conversing in public with a woman, especially a stranger, was highly unconventional. Apart from Christianity, the position of women in the East is much the same to-day as it was in Our Lord's time. If in Christian lands women are regarded as spiritually equal with men, that is one of the fruits of Christianity. St. Paul will say: 'All of you who were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. In him is neither Jew nor Greek [Gentile], neither slave nor free, neither male nor female; for ye are all one person in Christ Jesus' (Gal. 3, 28). Jesus himself calmly ignored the conventions of his time, and delivered his message to women in the same manner as he did to men.

When they pressed him to partake of the food they had brought, he said to them:

I have food to eat that ye know not. . . . My food is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work. Say ye not, 'There are yet four months and then cometh the harvest?' Behold I say to you, lift up your eyes and see



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the fields, how they are white unto [with the promise of] harvest. Already he that reapeth receiveth wages and gathereth fruit unto everlasting life, that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For herein is the saying true, 'One soweth, and another reapeth'. I have sent you to reap that whereon ye have not laboured; others have laboured, and ye are entered into their labour.

The sowers are probably Moses and the prophets, the reapers Christ's apostles, and the fruit the souls whom these bring to everlasting life. They remained two days at Sychar and many of the Samaritans, after hearing Jesus preach, declared him to be indeed 'the Saviour of the world' or Messiah.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE GALILEAN MINISTRY

*A.D. 28. May. Cana. The Nobleman's Son (J. 4)*

JESUS SPENT THE next twelve months in Galilee, which was thus the principal scene of his public ministry. In Jerusalem and Judaea he had not met with any notable response to his message. But the Galileans had heard from other pilgrims what he had done there and received him with enthusiasm. Moreover, soon after his return, Jesus miraculously cured the son of a prominent man, one of Herod's officers. He was at Cana when the father came from Capharnaum and asked him to go down there and heal his son, whom he had left in a dying condition. Perhaps to test his faith, Jesus said to him,

Unless ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.

'Lord,' replied the father, 'come down ere my child die.'  
Then Jesus said,

Go thy way, thy son liveth.

The father trusted Jesus' word and was on his way home when he was met with the news that his son was better; in answer to his enquiry he was told that the fever had left him at the very moment that Jesus had given the assurance. And he and all his household believed in Jesus.

*Capharnaum. Many Cures. Call of Peter (M. 4 and 8; Mk. 1;  
L. 4 and 5)*

All Galilee was soon talking of the new prophet who had appeared and his praise was on all men's lips. So far, in his



public utterances, Jesus had only taken up the message of John the Baptist:

The fullness of time is come and the kingdom of God is nigh; repent and believe in the gospel [i.e. the good news of the coming of the Messiah and the kingdom].

Shortly after the cure of the nobleman's son, Jesus himself went on to Capharnaum, which he intended to make his headquarters. There on the Sabbath, according to his custom, he attended a prayer meeting in the synagogue. Public worship in the strictest sense was confined to the Temple at Jerusalem, but on the Sabbath Jews used to meet together in the local synagogue to pray and sing Psalms, listen to a reading from the Scriptures and hear a discourse thereon by some rabbi [teacher], who was usually a scribe. A visitor, known to be a public teacher, might be asked to speak, as we see from Luke's later account of what happened when Paul and his companions visited Pisidian Antioch: 'They entered the synagogue on the sabbath day and took their seat. After the reading of the Law and of the prophets the presidents of the synagogue sent word to them saying, "Brethren, if ye have any words of exhortation unto the people, speak"' (Acts 13). Jesus now began what was to be his regular practice of delivering his message in the synagogues. In the words of Edersheim (*Life of Jesus the Messiah*), 'the synagogue became the cradle of the Church.' Jesus' hearers at Capharnaum 'were astounded at his teaching; for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.' The kind of discourse they were accustomed to was a learned disquisition on the sacred text with the recital of innumerable rabbinical traditions. Jesus left all that aside and spoke to them simply and directly but with a new conviction and complete mastery of his subject. We may recall St. Paul's description of his

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own preaching at Thessalonica: 'Our preaching to you did not depend upon mere argument; power was there and the influence of the Holy Spirit, and an effect of full conviction . . .' (1 Thess. 1, 5). If such was the preaching of the Apostle, much more so must have been the preaching of the Master himself.

The emotion caused by Jesus' discourse was too much for one unfortunate in the congregation, a demoniac. He suddenly yelled: 'What have we to do with thee, Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us. I know thee, who thou art—the holy one of God.' Jesus said to the evil spirit:

Hold thy peace, and go out of him.

Thereupon the man fell into a convulsion—and was cured. The onlookers were not slow to note that the authority possessed by Jesus was not in word only, but was able to manifest itself in deeds. But some too will not have failed to remark that the new teacher seemed to treat the Sabbath laws very lightly. From the synagogue Jesus went to the home of Simon and Andrew, and found there Peter's mother-in-law very sick with fever. Her too he cured, and so quickly did the news of these miracles spread that the same evening, when the Sabbath was ended, the house was besieged with sick and possessed persons, brought by their friends. 'The whole town was gathered round the door.' The disciples noted that when the possessed people kept on loudly addressing Jesus as 'Son of God', he silenced them 'because they knew him to be the Christ' (L.). The time was not yet ripe for Jesus to disclose himself.

The next morning, at daybreak, Jesus went out and found a quiet spot to pray. There Simon and others came to him, saying, 'All are seeking thee'. Jesus said to them,

Let us go elsewhere, to the neighbouring townlets, that



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there also I may preach, for thereunto came I forth. (To the other towns also must I proclaim the kingdom of God, for thereunto have I been sent—L.)

So he went about all Galilee, preaching in the synagogues and healing all manner of sickness and infirmity among the people. During this tour, a man suffering from leprosy<sup>1</sup> dared to approach a town or village where Jesus was—this was contrary to the regulations for lepers—and kneeling before him, said, 'If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.' Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying:

I [do so] will; be thou made clean.

And so it was. Jesus ordered the man to keep silence about the miracle until he had had it certified in the usual way:

See thou say naught to any man, but go, show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy purification what Moses commanded, for a witness unto them.

However, the cured man immediately began telling everybody, with the result that Jesus 'could no longer enter a town openly'—because of the crowds which immediately gathered, say the commentators. He remained therefore in the open country, but people came to him there from all sides.

It was part of Our Lord's plan to select from the followers who had attached themselves to him or others whom he found suitable a permanent group which would remain with him and receive the full benefit of his teaching. He already had his eye on the four fishermen of the Lakeside, Simon and Andrew, James and John. One morning at Capernaum, he

<sup>1</sup> An odd leaf from a lost codex, probably of the second century, says that the leper told Jesus how he had contracted the disease: 'Master Jesus, journeying with lepers and eating with them in the inn, I myself also became a leper.'

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found all four cleaning their nets after a night's fishing. There was already a crowd waiting to listen to Jesus, and so he went into Peter's boat and asked him to pull out a little from the land, and sitting there taught the people. Then, having observed that the boat was empty of fish, he said to Peter,

Launch thou forth into the deep, and lower ye your nets  
for a catch.

'Master,' said Peter, 'all night long we have toiled and have taken naught, but at thy word, I will lower the nets.' He did so and took a great quantity of fish, so that the nets were near breaking. Simon Peter was awe-stricken by the miracle, and, throwing himself at Jesus' feet, protested his unworthiness, 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.' But Jesus said to him,

Fear not, henceforth thou shalt catch men.

And he called the others too,

Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

And the four left everything and attached themselves to Jesus for good.

#### *'The Gospel of the Kingdom'*

Jesus went about preaching 'the Gospel of the kingdom'. While announcing that the kingdom of God was at hand, he was at the same time teaching the people what 'the kingdom of God' really meant. He had to make them understand that the coming of the kingdom meant a change not so much in their worldly status as in themselves, in their own lives, in their attitude towards God and towards their fellow-men. Actually that change could only be effected by the grace of God which would be given through Jesus himself. But the



first thing was to put the idea of such a change into their minds, to give them a new and truer conception of the coming kingdom. This in itself was a difficult task precisely because the Jews never forgot that they were God's Chosen People. According to their ideas, it was the Gentile who needed to be changed; the Jew's position was impregnable just because he was a Jew, a son of Abraham. The latter had of course to observe the Mosaic Law and all the outward rites prescribed by his religion. Provided he did that, he could rest secure in his privileged position as a Jew and the technical righteousness which the Law assured him. In fact, as Jesus well knew, this exterior orthodoxy and respectability could be a cover for every kind of selfishness and worldliness. He had to break through this complacency of theirs and give them a new understanding of what being a child of God and living as a child of God meant.

The Old Testament speaks of God not only as the King and ruler but also as the Father and as the Shepherd of Israel. These ideas were not so disparate then as they are now. A king was regarded as the father of his people; a father exercised a real authority over his family; both king and father were to those under their charge like a shepherd with his flock. All three ideas were to figure prominently in Our Lord's teaching. Now, while preaching God's sovereignty over men, it was especially the paternal aspect of that rule which he stressed. He spoke of God as the Father of men, of his love for them, and his pity for their sad condition. Thus he was preparing the way for the revelation that it was through himself, the true Son of God, that men would be able to recover their lost birthright and become again God's loving children.

The common people listened gladly to Our Lord's preaching and the cures which he wrought were of course a great

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attraction. Indeed, the crowd at the Lakeside was so great and so importunate at times, that 'he bade his disciples keep a light boat in readiness for him because of the multitude, for fear they should crush him' (Mk.). But the ultra-orthodox Pharisees and all those who had a vested interest in the Jewish religion as then practised were quick to perceive the revolutionary nature of this new teaching. It was inevitable that his disregard of Pharisaic traditions would soon bring Jesus into conflict with their rigid formalism.

*A.D. 28. June. Capharnaum. Cure of Paralytic (M. 9; Mk. 2; L. 5)*

Jesus had just returned to Capharnaum, and the news of his return soon brought a crowd to the house where he was staying. Some Pharisees and doctors of the law also seized the opportunity to hear this much-talked-of teacher. While Jesus sat there speaking, the roof above him was torn open and a pallet with a sick man on it was let down by ropes. A paralysed man had been brought by four men, and as they were unable to enter the house because of the crowd, they had taken this way of reaching Jesus. Jesus recognized their faith, but apparently he also saw that the sick man was fearful lest his sins should stand in the way of a cure, for he said to him,

Be of good heart, my child; thy sins are forgiven.

To the watchful scribes and Pharisees this sounded like blasphemy. 'Who can forgive sins save God alone?' they immediately thought, but they kept silence. Jesus, however, knew what was in their minds, and said to them,

Why reason ye thus in your hearts? (Why think ye evil in your hearts?—M.) Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Thy sins are forgiven' or to say, 'Arise and take up



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thy pallet, and walk'? But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins—[here he addressed the sick man] I say to thee, Arise, take up thy pallet, and go to thy home.

And so he did, to the stupefaction of the onlookers, who said, 'We never saw the like.' To declare sins forgiven was 'easier to say' because, from the nature of the case, there was nothing to show whether the words had taken effect or not. Jesus not only used his power of healing men's bodies to prove his power of healing their souls, but he implied that the former was, like the latter, Divine power.

#### *The Call of Levi or Matthew (M. 9; Mk. 2; L. 5)*

Matthew, the future Evangelist, was at this time employed as a customs-house official at Capharnaum. He belonged to the class called in the Gospel 'publicans', meaning collectors of tolls and taxes. They were despised by their fellow-Jews as being in the service of the alien rulers, in this case, perhaps, the rapacious Tetrarch Herod, a dependant of Rome. Matthew was actually at work in the customs-house when Jesus, passing, said to him,

Follow me.

And at once he left his work and followed Jesus. Later, Matthew celebrated the occasion by giving a feast in Jesus' honour, to which he invited many of his former colleagues and others of doubtful repute by the Pharisees' standards. Some of the latter afterwards complained to the disciples, 'Why doth your Master eat and drink with publicans and sinners?' Jesus overheard them and replied,

They that are in health have no need of a physician, but they that are ill. (Go ye and learn what this meaneth:

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‘Mercy I desire and not sacrifice’—M.) I am come, not to call just men but sinners unto repentance.

No Jew was outside the scope of the Saviour’s mission, and Jesus would not allow any man-made rules to prevent his making personal contact with those who needed his help. There is also perhaps an ironical allusion to the Pharisees, who were not really ‘just men’ (i.e. acceptable to God), but only considered themselves such.

#### *A Question of Fasting (M. 9; Mk. 2; L. 5)*

Another ground for criticism was that Jesus did not impose on his disciples the frequent fasts which were observed by the Pharisees, and also by the disciples of John the Baptist. Jesus replied,

Can the children of the bride-chamber fast (mourn—M.) while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast. But the days shall come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast, in that day.

If this incident is placed correctly, Jesus here gives the first prophetic hint of a violent end to his ministry. ‘Bridegroom’ was an accepted title of the Messiah, and Jesus implies that he is the Messiah who has come to claim Israel his bride; but the bridegroom will be suddenly taken away, and the joy of the groomsmen (Jesus’ disciples) turned to mourning. Jesus continued,

No one seweth a piece of new cloth on an old clcak; else the patch teareth away from it—the new from the old—and a worse rent is made. (No one putteth upon an old cloak a piece he hath torn from a new one, else not only will he have torn the new, but the piece from the new will not suit the old—L.) And no one poureth fresh wine into old wine-



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skins; else the wine will burst the skins, and wine and skins are lost. But fresh wine they pour into new skins, and both are preserved. (And no one that drinketh the old desireth the new; for he saith, 'The old is better'—L.)

These too are highly significant sayings, because they show that Jesus realized the distance which separated the new religion he had come to establish from the Jewish religion as then understood and practised. From one aspect his religion would be the fulfilment of Judaism, but from another it would involve a revolutionary break with it. Useless, he says, to tear Christianity to pieces in order to patch up Judaism. The spirit of the Gospel could never be confined within the forms of the Law as interpreted by the Pharisees.

#### *Sabbath Observance—The Ears of Corn (M. 12; Mk. 2; L. 6)*

The most frequent cause for complaint on the part of the Pharisees was Our Lord's disregard of the minute and finicking regulations which they had added to the Mosaic Law on the observance of the Sabbath. We have an example of these in the episode of the ears of corn. As they were all walking through a cornfield, the disciples casually plucked and rubbed some ears and ate the corn; they were hungry, says Matthew, who was one of them. But it was the Sabbath, and immediately some Pharisees present pounced on this 'unlawful' action. Jesus said to them,

Have ye not read what David did, when he and those with him were hungry—how he entered the house of God, in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the shewbread and gave thereof to them that were with him, which it was not lawful for him to do, nor for those with him, but only for the priests? Or have ye not read in the Law that on the sabbath the priests in the temple profane the sabbath

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[by performing their usual duties there], and are guiltless? But I tell you there is something greater than the temple here. Had ye known what this meaneth, 'Mercy I desire, and not sacrifice', ye would not have condemned the guiltless; for the Son of Man is Lord of the sabbath (M.).

The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath; so that the Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath (Mk.).

The story of David and the shew-bread is told in 1 Kings 21. The quotation is from the prophet Osee; Matthew also reports Our Lord as using it after the cure of the paralytic. 'Scripture often expresses relative truths in an absolute form . . . God did take pleasure in sacrifices when they were offered with a pure heart and in faithful obedience to His own precepts concerning sacrifices, but He was pleased rather with mercy, and He could take no pleasure in sacrifices offered with a revengeful and unforgiving heart' (Sutcliffe, *The Old Testament and the Future Life*). Jesus not only declared that the claims of mercy and charity over-ride those of religious observance, but he 'asserted a general right to abrogate the Sabbath Law for men's ordinary convenience' (Abrahams, *Studies in Pharisaism*). Besides, all the means of sanctification, including the Sabbath and the Temple itself, were subject to the Divine Messiah, but this, according to Our Lord's custom, is implied rather than asserted.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Codex Bezae of the third Gospel adds here another Saying of Jesus (not included in the Vulgate), which contains in germ the whole Christian doctrine of conscience: On the same day, seeing one working on the Sabbath, he said unto him,

Man, if indeed thou knowest what thou doest, thou art blessed; but if thou knowest not, thou art cursed, and a transgressor of the Law.

Another Saying attributed to Jesus runs:

If ye fast not from the world, ye shall not find the kingdom of God, and if ye keep not Sabbath for the whole week, ye shall not see the Father (Oxyrhynchus Papyri).



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*Man with Withered Hand* (M. 12 ; Mk. 3 ; L. 6)

On another Sabbath, Jesus was attending the synagogue and a man had come there who had a withered hand. St. Jerome in his commentary notes that in the apocryphal 'Gospel according to the Hebrews', this man is said to have been a mason and that he addressed Jesus saying, 'I was a mason seeking a livelihood with my hands. I pray thee, Jesus, to restore me mine health, that I may not beg meanly for my food.' Whether this was so or not, the congregation was on the alert to see what Jesus would do, and the now definitely hostile Pharisees were hoping for a clear case against him. According to Matthew, they asked him, 'Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?' According to Mark and Luke, it was Jesus who took the initiative, saying to the afflicted man,

Arise and stand forth into the midst,  
and then turning to the Pharisees—

I ask you, is it lawful to do good on the sabbath, or to do harm: to save life or to destroy it?

In Matthew, Our Lord replied, to the onlookers' question:

What man of you, if he shall have but one sheep and this fall into a pit on the sabbath, will not lay hold thereof and lift it out? Well, how much greater the worth of a man than of a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the sabbath.

Mark records that Jesus showed by his looks that he was both grieved and angry at the hardness of their hearts. To the man, he said,

Stretch forth thy hand.

He stretched it out, and it was restored to health.

It was after this episode, according to all three Synoptics,

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that the Pharisees decided that Jesus must be got rid of, and discussed among themselves how it could best be done. They were filled with fury, says Luke.

#### *Other Cures on the Sabbath (L. 13 and 14)*

Luke alone records two other miraculous cures which were performed on the Sabbath. We give them here, although they may have occurred at a later period. The first was of a woman suffering from curvature of the spine. Jesus noticed her while he was preaching in a synagogue, and he called her and, putting his hand on her, said,

Woman, thou art delivered from thine infirmity.

The woman was cured and began praising God, but the president of the synagogue said angrily, 'Six days there are whereon one should work; on these, then, come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day.' Jesus said,

Ye hypocrites, doth not every man of you on the sabbath loose his ox or ass from the manger and lead it forth to water? And this daughter of Abraham, whom Satan had bound, lo, for eighteen years, was she not to be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?

At these words, his adversaries were put to shame, while the people rejoiced over the marvellous things he did.

On another Sabbath, Jesus had been invited to take a meal with a prominent Pharisee (cf. Chap. 7: Parable of the More Honourable Seats), and among the crowd watching him there was a man suffering from dropsy. Jesus turned to the Pharisees and lawyers present and asked them.

Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath, or not?



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They made no reply, and Jesus took the man by the hand and cured him. He then asked them,

Which of you, if his son or his ox fall into a well, will not straightway draw him up on the sabbath day?

To this they could find no answer.

*A.D. 28. June. Choice of the Twelve (M. 10; Mk. 3; L. 6)*

Jesus took a decisive step in the establishment of 'the kingdom' as a visible organization when he made formal choice, among the disciples who were more or less loosely attached to him, of 'the Twelve'—the number of the tribes of Israel—who were henceforward to be with him and receive a systematic training at his hands and also to be sent out by him to preach. The solemnity of the occasion was marked by the fact that Jesus retired to a lonely hill and spent the whole night in prayer before he announced his choice. The names were: Simon Peter, his brother Andrew, James and John the sons of Zebedee, Philip and Bartholomew (who may have been Philip's friend Nathanael), Matthew (Levi), the former publican, Thomas, who was called Didymus or 'the twin', James, the son of Alphaeus, Jude (Thaddaeus) 'the brother of James' (L.), Simon called 'the Zealous', and Judas Iscariot (i.e. of Kerioth, a town of Judah or perhaps of Moab). James and John, it is noted by Mark, were called 'sons of thunder' by Jesus. The other James is probably the 'James the Little' of Mk. 15, 40, and it was perhaps with reference to their stature that the two Jameses came to be distinguished as James the Greater (son of Zebedee) and James the Less (son of Alphaeus). It is a moot question whether James the Less is identical with 'James, the brother of the Lord' who was leader of the early Christians at Jerusalem and author of the Epistle of St. James. The Eastern Church honours them with separate

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feasts, but in the Western Church the more common opinion is that they were one and the same. The author of the Epistle of St. Jude is there styled 'the brother of James', who is generally identified with the author of the Epistle of St. James. In the gospels Simon Peter is always placed first in the list of the Twelve, and Judas Iscariot last.

A crowd had as usual followed Jesus, and it had become very great, being drawn not only from Galilee and Judaea but from all the countries round, from Tyre and Sidon in the North, from Decapolis in the East, and from Idumaea far in the South. Now, sitting on the hillside, with his disciples around him, he delivered the discourse known as the Sermon on the Mount.

#### *The Sermon on the Mount (M. 5, 6 and 7; L. 6)*

Both Matthew and Luke report this discourse of Our Lord and nearly the whole of Luke's discourse is contained in that of Matthew, which is much longer. Matthew may have added sayings of Our Lord that were not part of this particular discourse; some of them are in fact assigned to other occasions by Luke and Mark. The Sermon on the Mount cannot in any case be taken as a complete statement of Our Lord's teaching. As already explained, his task at this period of his ministry was rather preparatory, to correct popular misconceptions and create the right dispositions for the acceptance of the full revelation, which would come later. That is why the Sermon is mainly ethical.

#### *The Beatitudes*

Jesus first, in the Beatitudes, indicated the kind of people who were most likely to respond, and were in fact responding, to his teaching. They were those pious Israelites who are designated in the Psalms and in the Prophetical Books—also



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in the Magnificat—as the poor, the needy, the humble, the meek: in other words, devout souls who suffered at the tribulations of Israel but whom oppression had drawn nearer to God, who realized their own impotence and looked to Him for salvation, and who meanwhile accepted their sufferings in a patient and humble spirit. They were in reality ‘blessed’, because they were in the best disposition to welcome the Messiah. The different beatitudes do not refer to different types of men but rather to different aspects of this one type.

Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God (L.).

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens. Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the land (M.).

‘Blessed’ here means ‘happy, fortunate, well-off’. It is not a wish but a statement of fact. The expression is very common in the Old Testament, e.g. ‘Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven . . . ; blessed is the man to whom Jehovah imputeth not iniquity . . .’ (Ps. 31). ‘Poor in spirit’ means a spirit that meekly accepts poverty and all tribulations as God’s will. ‘The meek’ in the second Beatitude is also rendered ‘the humble’, ‘the gentle’, ‘the patient’, ‘the resigned’. It is the same type as ‘the poor’ but from another aspect, and the reward promised is the same. The ‘meek’ man easily gives way to, and lets himself be jostled aside by, others; he is the opposite of the hard, avaricious man, who seizes all he can for himself. It is the former however who will ‘inherit the land’.

Blessed are ye that weep now, for ye shall laugh (L.).

Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted (M.).

The mourners are especially those whom Isaiah calls the

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'mourners of Sion' (61, 3), i.e. those who were inconsolable until God's kingdom should come.

Blessed are ye that hunger now, for ye shall have your fill (L.).

Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justness [holiness, perfection], for they shall have their fill (M.).

In the prophecy of Isaiah, God says to those who have forsaken him: 'Behold my servants shall eat, and ye shall be hungry: behold my servants shall drink, and ye shall be thirsty' (65, 13). The Psalmist (41) expressed the pious Israelite's desire: 'As the hind longeth for the brooks of water, so doth my soul long for thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God.' Such was the yearning of the pious for the fulfilment of God's Messianic promises.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall find mercy.

'Merciful' is *eleēmōn*, from which we get the word eleemosynary. It means pitiful, compassionate, charitable in the wider sense. The Good Samaritan is an example of the 'merciful' man; he both sympathized with the sufferer and assisted him. God is compassionate towards the sinner and that is why he sent the Saviour; and Jesus not only succoured man but felt for him in his misery. 'It is not as if our high priest was incapable of feeling for us in our humiliations; he has been through every trial, fashioned as we are, only sinless' (Heb. 4, 15).

Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God (M.).

'The pure heart is the single heart (*cor simplex*),' says St. Augustine. To be 'pure in heart' is to be single in purpose, whole-hearted in God's service. Jesus will stress the importance of this later (cf. Chap. 7: The Sign of Jonah).



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Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God (M.).

The 'peacemakers' are those who seek after the peace which God alone can give, possess it in their souls, and spread it around them. This peace was to be one of the characteristics of the Messianic kingdom; it was the peace which Jesus bequeathed to his disciples, and which St. Paul describes as 'the peace which passeth all understanding'.

Blessed are they that have suffered persecution for justness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens. Blessed are ye when they shall reproach you, and persecute you, and speak all evil against you, lying, because of me; rejoice and exult, because your reward is great in the heavens. For thus did they persecute the prophets who were before you (M.). Blessed are ye when men shall hate you and when they shall excommunicate you, and reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, because of the Son of Man . . . (L.).

'Because of me'. St. John Chrysostom comments: 'Christ here makes known his dignity as equal to his Father's; just as the Old Testament saints had suffered for the Father, so, he tells his disciples, must you suffer for me.'

Matthew gives eight beatitudes, Luke four beatitudes and four corresponding 'woes':

Woe to you rich, for ye already have your comfort.

Woe to you, ye that are sated now, for ye shall hunger.

Woe to you, ye that laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep.

Woe to you, when all men applaud you, for in the self-same manner their fathers treated the false prophets (L.).

### *The Christian Ideal*

The contrast is sharply drawn between the spirit that is in

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harmony with Christ and the spirit of 'the world', i.e. human life as lived without regard to Almighty God and his laws. The dominant characteristics of the former are zeal for God's glory and the desire of contributing thereto, combined with the sense of dependence upon God and submission in all things to his holy will. The history of the saints of the Church shows that this spirit is adaptable to every type of human character and compatible with the fullest development of every human quality and talent. At the same time, it is undoubtedly the gentler and more self-effacing virtues that are stressed both here and in the epistles of St. Paul: patience, kindness, beneficence, gentleness, compassion, humility, meekness, long-suffering, readiness to forgive injuries, culminating in the willing acceptance of persecution for the sake of Jesus.

Fr. Lebreton writes: 'The whole programme of humility and death was imposed upon Jesus as Redeemer of the world; and if it was for him thus to humble himself and to suffer, it was that he might atone for man's rebellion and the forbidden pleasure of sin. But, in his turn, he is our model and our ideal; whose example traces for us the only way by which we can reach the kingdom of God. So, in the last analysis, the whole scheme of the beatitudes was determined by God with the redemption of the world in view.' Similarly, Dr. Sanday says: 'It was not an accident that Christianity is the religion of the Crucified. The Cross is but the culminating expression of a spirit which was characteristic of it throughout. Its peculiar note is *Victory through Suffering*. . . . The example which Jesus set in founding his faith by dying for it, was an example which his disciples were called upon to follow into all its logical consequences. Christianity wins its way by lowly service, by patience, by self-sacrifice. History shows that there are no instruments of religious propaganda



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comparable to these. It also shows that the type of character connected with them is of the very highest attractiveness and beauty.'

Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt become insipid, wherewith shall it be salted? It is no longer fit for aught but to be cast forth and trampled upon by men. Ye are the light of the world. A city set upon a mountain cannot be hid. Neither do men light a lamp and put it under the bushel, but upon the lampstand, and it giveth light to all in the house. Even so let your light shine before men, in order that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in the heavens (M.).

According to Mark and Luke, Jesus used the same metaphor of salt on a later occasion when talking to the Twelve (cf. Chap. 5: Duty of Avoiding Occasions of Sin), and it is evidently his followers who are 'the salt of the earth' and 'the light of the world' (cf. Chap. 6: The Light of the World).

#### *The New Law and the Old (M. 5; L. 6 and 16)*

Think not that I have come to destroy the Law or the prophets; I have come, not to destroy, but to fulfil. Amen I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not one jot or one tittle shall pass away from the Law till all things be accomplished (M.). It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the Law to fail (L.).

The Hebrew Scriptures consisted of the Law (the Pentateuch) and the Prophets (all the rest). Jesus was accused by the Pharisees and others of working to destroy the Law and the Prophets because he disregarded many of their interpretations of them. He was in reality fulfilling or perfecting the Law because he looked in it for the will of God, the Divine legislator's intention. He obeyed the Law as God really wanted it

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to be obeyed. In a similar sense, St. Paul will say: 'Charity is the fulfilment of the Law' (Rom. 13, 10). Now it was to St. Paul especially, and to the spirit of Christ which guided him, that the Early Church owed its deliverance from the Jewish Law, and in particular from the fundamental obligation of circumcision. Yet despite this abrogation of the Law, Paul can assert that the Law is 'fulfilled' in the Christian regime of charity. 'Fulfilment' therefore was not incompatible with changes, even fundamental changes, in religious practice, and with the eventual disappearance of all the ceremonial part of the Mosaic Law. But these developments lay in the future, when the New Covenant and the New Israel would have come into being. Those to whom Our Lord was speaking could not then appreciate the necessity of such changes; they needed rather to be reassured as to Jesus' fidelity to the Law. Jesus continued,

Whosoever therefore shall make void one of these least commandments and shall so teach men, he shall be called least in the kingdom of the heavens; but whosoever shall do and teach, he shall be called great in the kingdom of the heavens. For I tell you that unless your justness abound beyond that of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall not enter the kingdom of the heavens.

It was Jesus' complaint against the Pharisees that they 'made void the commandment of God' by their traditions (M. 15, 6), and that they themselves did not do what they taught others (M. 23, 3). While Jesus sought only God's will in his law and so obeyed it perfectly, the Pharisees attended only to the letter of the law, and while keeping within the letter, managed by the use of casuistry to evade the Divine will. The 'justness' of the Pharisees consisted in this outward compliance with the letter of the law, which might be devoid of



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any sincere desire to do God's will, whereas the 'justness' taught by Jesus consisted in the sincere desire to know and carry out fully the will of God. Jesus proceeded to illustrate this by taking six examples from the Jewish law and practice then current, dealing with homicide, adultery, separation (of partners in marriage), oaths, retaliation, and treatment of enemies, and comparing in each case observance according to the letter of the law with observance according to the spirit of the law. His hearers were especially struck by the authority with which he uttered his 'But I tell you . . .'

Ye have heard that it was said to the ancients, 'Thou shalt not kill', and whosoever killeth shall be liable to judgment. But I tell you, that everyone that is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment: and whosoever saith to his brother '*Raca*' [blockhead] shall be liable to come before the council [the Sanhedrin]: and whosoever saith 'Thou fool' shall be liable to the hell [Gehenna] of fire.

The scale of offences and penalties used here is scarcely intelligible to the modern reader; no doubt it was otherwise with those who listened to the speaker. The main point however is clear: the interior movement of anger, deliberately consented to, is as much an infraction of the law and deserving of punishment as the act of murder to which it may lead. Notice too how Our Lord reminds his hearers that all men are 'brothers'.

If therefore thou be offering thy gift at the altar, and there remember that thy brother hath something against thee [i.e. some ground of complaint against you], leave there thy gift before the altar and go first and be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'In the Gospel according to the Hebrews, it is placed among the greatest sins "if a man have grieved the spirit of his brother"' (Jerome).

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Ye have heard that it was said, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery'. But I tell you, that everyone that looketh upon a woman so as to lust after her hath already committed adultery with her in his heart. Yea, if thy right eye scandalize thee [is the occasion of your falling into sin], pluck it out and cast it from thee; for it is better for thee that one of thy members perish, and thy whole body be not cast into hell [Gehenna]. And if thy right hand scandalize thee, cut it off and cast it from thee; for it is better for thee that one of thy members perish and thy whole body depart not into hell.

And it was said, 'Whosoever putteth away his wife, let him give her a writ of divorce'. But I tell you that every man that putteth away his wife, save on account of impurity [fornication], maketh her to suffer [exposes her to] adultery; and whosoever marrieth her that is put away committeth adultery (M.). Every man that putteth away his wife and marrieth another committeth adultery, and he that marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery (L.). [cf. Chap. 7: Indissolubility of Marriage-Bond.]

Again, ye have heard that it was said to the ancients, 'Thou shalt not forswear [perjure] thyself' and 'Thou shalt fulfil to the Lord thine oaths'. But I tell you, not to swear at all, neither by heaven, for 'it is the throne of God', nor by earth, for 'it is the footstool of his feet', nor by Jerusalem, for it is 'the city of the great king'. Neither swear thou by thy head, for thou canst not make a single hair white or black. But let your speech be 'Yea, yea', 'Nay, nay'; more than this is from the evil one.

Ye have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye' and 'tooth for tooth'. But I tell you, not to resist the evil-doer. Nay, whosoever smiteth thee upon thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And to him that would go to law with thee and take thy tunic, give up thy cloak also. And whosoever compelleth thee to go one mile, go with him twain [two]. Give to him that asketh thee; and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not away.



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Ye have heard that it was said, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour' and hate thine enemy. But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you, that ye may become yourselves children of your Father who is in the heavens; for he maketh his sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and he raineth upon the just and the unjust. If ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the very same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the gentiles the very same? Ye, therefore, shall be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect (M.).

Luke (6) combines the Master's teaching on retaliation and treatment of enemies as follows:

To you who give ear I say, love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, pray for them that ill-treat you. To him that striketh thee on the cheek, offer the other also; and from him that taketh away thy cloak, withhold not thy tunic also. Give to everyone that asketh of thee, and from him that taketh away thy goods, ask no return. In fine, as ye would that men should do unto you, so do ye unto them. If ye love them that love you, what merit have ye? Even the sinners love those who love them. And if ye do good unto them that do good unto you, what merit have ye? Even the sinners do the very same. And if ye lend to those from whom ye hope to receive back, what merit have ye? Even sinners lend unto sinners, in order that they may receive as much in return. Nay, love your enemies and do good to them, and lend without hope of recovery, and great shall be your reward, and ye shall be children of the Most High, for himself is good to the ungrateful and evil. Have pity, even as your Father hath pity.

#### *The Root Idea and the Proverbial Style*

At first sight, these six examples and Our Lord's comments on them do not seem to have anything in common. But there

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is a root idea, from which all Jesus' moral teaching springs. It is that God is our all-knowing and loving Father, and that we are all his children. Hence it follows that there must be no hatred towards any of our brethren in our hearts, for our common Father sees our hearts as well as our actions. For the same reason, we must be pure in mind and heart as well as in deed, holy as our Father is holy. The marriage-bond is inviolable because made before God, sanctioned and blessed by him. Again, we must be perfectly truthful as God is truthful; such a man needs no oath to confirm his word. Still less will he use the evasions invented by the scribes, such as swearing by heaven or by earth or by the Temple, counting on such oaths not to be binding. Passion for revenge was characteristic of the Jews, as many examples in the Old Testament show. To this common failing, Jesus opposes the law of love, and to drive home the lesson, he goes, as it were, to the other extreme. So far from seeking revenge, we should turn the other cheek. So far from hating our enemies, we should try to love them. They are all our brothers. Our common Father continues to bestow his care and natural blessings even on those who are ungrateful and wicked. Similarly we should be generous with our goods, always ready to help a brother in need, without stopping to think whether we shall be repaid or not. In short, the 'fulfilment' of God's law requires that we should aim at nothing less than perfection: 'Ye, therefore, shall be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect.'

Jesus here, as throughout his preaching, made use of a proverbial and parabolic style, to which his Semitic auditors were well accustomed. Proverbs, aphorisms, maxims and parabolic illustrations of a startling kind are easily remembered. In fact, it is mainly these which have survived and been recorded; a verbatim report of the whole sermon



would no doubt have been much longer. This proverbial and parabolic style accounts for what to the modern reader may appear exaggeration and overstatement. To Jesus' hearers, this will not have caused any misunderstanding; they will not have thought for a moment of literally tearing out an eye or cutting off a hand, or even offering the left cheek to one that should strike the right. These were clearly not precepts to be taken literally. Proverbs, too, are apt to give only one aspect of a question; other aspects, equally true, may be expressed in other maxims. Thus Jesus could say, 'Let your light shine before men, in order that they may see your good works', to teach the duty of edification, and a little later, 'Take heed that ye do not your justness before men to be seen by them,' as a warning against vain glory. This shows that one should not isolate any single statement and build an imaginary 'Christianity' on that alone, as Tolstoy did with the saying 'Resist not evil.'

On the other hand, we must be careful not to weaken the force of Our Lord's words or ignore their drastic character, for it is nothing less than a spiritual revolution which he is directing. One way of committing this error would be to assume that these teachings are not for all Christians, that they only apply to certain classes of Christians. Such an error might arise in this way. The Church distinguishes in Our Lord's teachings between those which are precepts or commands and those which are 'counsels of perfection', because it is necessary that men should know the limits of the strictly obligatory. Now within the Church there have grown up communities of men and women, called 'religious', who make it their purpose in life to aim at perfection, and the practice of 'the counsels of perfection'. But as a result other Christians might come to think that 'the counsels' are intended only for 'religious' and are no concern at all of the

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ordinary Christian. There is not the slightest ground for any such distinction in the Gospels. The 'counsels' were not addressed only to the Twelve, or to those who had attached themselves to Jesus in a special manner, but to the ordinary men and women who gathered to hear him. It is the Christian life itself which Jesus is describing to them, a totally new way of living, in which the Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of men become dominating principles, in which each one's mind and heart are wide open to every breath of God's Spirit, in which material things are no more than ephemeral means of enabling ourselves and others to do our Father's will.

#### *Against Ostentatious Piety (M. 6)*

The Sermon on the Mount continues:

Take heed that ye do not your justness [good deeds] before men to be seen by them; otherwise ye have no reward with your Father who is in the heavens. When therefore thou givest alms, sound not a trumpet before thee, as do the hypocrites in the synagogues and in the streets, in order that they may be honoured by men. Amen I say to you, they have already their reward. But thou, when thou givest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth, in order that thine almsgiving may be in secret; and thy Father, who seeth in secret, will requite [reward] thee.

And when ye pray, ye shall not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand at prayer in the synagogues and at the street-corners, in order that they may be seen by men. Amen I say to you, they have already their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter thy chamber and shut thy door and pray to thy Father who is in secret; and thy Father who seeth in secret will requite thee.

And when ye fast, wear ye not gloomy looks, as do the hypocrites; for they disfigure their faces in order that they



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may be seen by men to fast. Amen I say to you, they have already their reward. But thou, when fasting, anoint thy head and wash thy face in order that thou mayest not be seen by men to fast, but by thy Father who is in secret; and thy Father, who seeth in secret, will requite thee.

In the above passages is particularly noticeable the rhythmic quality which will already have been apparent in Our Lord's public utterances. Hebrew poetry is based on thought-rhythm: a single thought is expressed in a single line, and then a second line either repeats the same thought in other words, or gives its opposite, or develops the original thought. Here are examples from Our Lord's sayings:

- (1) A disciple is not above his master:  
nor a servant above his lord.
- (2) Every good tree beareth sound fruit:  
and a bad tree beareth evil fruit.
- (3) Call ye father no man upon earth:  
for one only is your Father, who is in heaven.

The advantage of this style in teaching is that the lines are easily remembered by the hearers, and so it was that Our Lord's very words were passed from one person to another and handed down from parents to children. Dr. Burney, in *The Poetry of Our Lord*, shows that the rhythmic forms are better preserved in Matthew than in Mark and Luke, and also that they are preserved in the fourth Gospel, an additional proof that the discourses of Our Lord recorded there are authentic.

The Lord's prayer, which Matthew inserts after the second of the three paragraphs above, is given in a different context by Luke (cf. Chap. 7: The Lord's Prayer).

#### *On Worldly Cares (M. 6; L. 12)*

Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth

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and rust consume, and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consume, and where thieves break not in nor steal. For where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also. . . . No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will cleave to one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon [money]. Therefore I say to you, be not anxious about your life, what ye are to eat or what to drink; nor for your body, how ye are to be clothed. Is not the life more than the food, and the body more than the clothing? Look ye at the birds of heaven (the ravens—L.) how they sow not, nor reap, nor gather [grain] into barns, and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye worth far more than they? And which of you, by being anxious, can add to his life a single span [a short space of time]? (If then ye cannot do what is so little, why are ye anxious concerning the rest?—L.) And why are ye anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they labour not, neither do they spin: yet I say to you, that not even Solomon in all his glory was clothed as one of these. If then the grass of the field, which today liveth and tomorrow is to be cast into the oven, God doth so attire, how much more you, O ye of little faith? Therefore be not anxious, saying, 'What are we to eat?' or 'What are we to drink?' or 'What are we to put on?' For after all these things the gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first his kingdom and his justness, and all these things shall be added unto you.<sup>1</sup> Therefore be not anxious for the morrow; the morrow will have anxieties of its own. Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof [For today, today's troubles are enough].

<sup>1</sup> A Saying of Jesus found in the early writers is:

Ask ye for the greater things, and the small shall be added unto you; and ask for the heavenly things, and the earthly shall be added unto you.



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Luke has simply: 'Seek ye his [your heavenly Father's] kingdom', with no mention of justice. Lagrange's translation of Matthew is: 'Seek ye first the kingdom and its justice', with the comment that it was by devotion to God's will (justice) that Jesus' hearers were to promote his reign among men. So, too, in the Lord's Prayer, 'Thy kingdom come, thy will be done.'

Jesus was not telling his hearers to imitate birds and flowers. These creatures of God live according to their nature, and man has to live according to his nature. Consequently man has to use the talents God has given him, and exercise ordinary prudence in managing his affairs. But it is another thing for man to become wholly absorbed in the cares of this life and to have his mind continually beset by temporal worries. That is what Our Lord condemned. Your chief care should always be the glory of God, he says in effect, and for the rest, do your best and leave the result in God's hands. God's Providence is over all his creatures, even the birds and flowers. These make no provision for the future; their worth is far less than man's; they have but a brief existence. If, then, even they are not excluded from God's Providence, how much more certain man can be of enjoying his heavenly Father's care. At the same time, in his closing sentence Jesus reveals a deep understanding of and sympathy with human cares.

Incidentally from the manner in which Jesus spoke of the birds and flowers we see his human appreciation of natural beauties. The 'lilies of the field' were probably anemones which grow wild in Galilee; when they are withered, the peasants gather them in armfuls and use them as fuel for the earthen pots in which they bake their bread.

*Various Teachings (M. 7; L. 6 and 11)*

Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and

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ye shall not be condemned. Pardon, and ye shall be pardoned: give, and it shall be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over shall they pour into your lap. For with what measure ye measure, it shall be measured unto you in return (L.).

Judge not, that ye may not be judged: for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye measure, it shall be measured unto you. Why seest thou the mote [speck of dust] in thy brother's eye, and perceivest not the beam in thine own eye? Or how canst thou say to thy brother, 'Let me cast out the mote from thine eye', and behold, there is the beam in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam from thine own eye, and then shalt thou see well to cast out the mote from thy brother's eye (M.).

Give not that which is holy to the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before the swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and rend you.<sup>1</sup>

The pigs would take the pearls for peas or acorns, and finding their mistake would attack those who had deceived them. Some of Jesus' hearers may have been thinking that they could never hope to reach the heights to which he was pointing them, for he continued,

Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. What man of you is there, whose son shall ask of him a loaf and he will hand him a stone? Or shall ask for a fish, and he will hand him a serpent? (or if he ask for an egg, will hand him a scorpion?—L.) If ye then, evil as ye are, know how to give good gifts to your

<sup>1</sup> A Saying reported by Clement of Alexandria:

My secret [mystery] for me and for the sons of mine house.



### *Jesus in His Own Words*

children, how much more will your Father in the heavens give good things (the Holy Spirit—L.) to them that ask him?

As in the case of pearls and peas above, there might be an outward resemblance between 'a loaf' and 'a stone', or between 'a fish' and 'a serpent', but not between 'a scorpion' and 'an egg'.

Whatsoever therefore ye would that men should do unto you, the same do ye also unto them; for this is the Law and the prophets. (As ye would that men should do unto you, so do ye unto them—L.)

Enter ye by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad the way that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter thereby. But narrow is the gate and close the way that leadeth to life, and few are they that find it.

Beware ye of false prophets, such as come to you in sheep's clothing, but within are ravening wolves. By their fruits ye shall know them. (For every tree is known by its fruit—L.) Do men gather grapes from thorns [briers], or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree beareth sound fruit, and the bad tree beareth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, nor a bad tree bring forth sound fruit. Every tree that doth not bring forth sound fruit is cut down and cast into the fire. By their fruits, then, ye shall know them. Not everyone that saith to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of the heavens, but he that doth the will of my Father, who is in the heavens. (Why do ye call me, Lord, Lord, and not do the things I say?—L.) Many shall say to me in that day [the day of judgment], 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in thy name, and cast out devils in thy name, and work many miracles in thy name?' And then shall I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, ye workers of iniquity'.

Here Jesus speaks publicly of God as 'my Father', and implies that he, Jesus, will be the judge at the Final Judgment.

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### Conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount

The conclusion of the sermon follows. We give the two versions:

Everyone therefore that heareth these my words and doth them, he shall be like to a wise man who built his house upon the rock [Greek *petra*; Aramaic *kepha*]. And the rain fell, and the torrents came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell not, for it was founded upon the rock. And everyone that heareth these my words and doth them not shall be like to a foolish man who built his house upon the sand. And the rain fell, and the torrents came, and the winds blew and smote upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall thereof (M.).

Everyone that cometh unto me and heareth my words and doth them—I will shew you to whom he is like: he is like to a man building a house, who dug deep and laid a foundation upon the rock [Greek, *petra*; Aramaic, *kepha*]. And on the coming of a flood, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. But he that hath heard and hath not done them is like to a man who built a house upon the ground with no foundation; against which the stream broke and straightway down it fell, and great was the wreck of that house (L.).

### The New Spirit—Charity

‘But I tell you, love your enemies’ was one of the most striking, and also one of the most characteristic, commands of the new interpretation of the Law given by Jesus Christ. The Greek verb used here for ‘love’ is *agapan*, and the noun expressing this kind of ‘love’ is *agape*, which is translated either by ‘love’ or by ‘charity’. Fr. Prat, in *La Théologie de Saint Paul*, explains that the Greeks had four verbs to express love and friendship: (1) *philein*, a generic term covering all kinds of love, good and bad—the contrary of ‘to hate’; also a sentiment born of attraction or familiarity; (2) *stergein*,



used to express natural affection between parents and children, husband and wife, love of country, etc.—it does not occur in the New Testament; (3) *eran*, passionate love, usually of a sexual nature—it does not occur in the New Testament, but St. Ignatius of Antioch used it in his famous saying, 'My love is crucified', meaning that he had subdued his natural appetites; (4) *agapan*, which means to love by esteem and by choice. In the Vulgate it is translated by *diligere*, while *philein* is translated by *amare*. Charity therefore originally meant a love, not of feeling, sentiment or natural impulse, but deliberate and founded on esteem or duty. It is the term chosen by the New Testament writers to express God's love for us, our love for God, our love for God's other children—our brethren, and in particular the specifically Christian love of one's enemies. But God is also said to love us with tenderness (*philein*) because he is our Father, and when St. Paul says, 'if any one loveth not the Lord, let him be anathema' (1 Cor. 16, 22), he uses *philein* (cf. Chap. 9: Supreme Authority Conferred on Peter).

Although Jesus said he was only giving the Law its true meaning, it was in fact a new spirit that he was introducing into the world, a new way of regarding God and one's fellow men, a new scale of values, a new manner of judging things. It was the spirit of Jesus himself, the true Son of God, and that spirit he laboured to create in his followers. 'We have the mind of Christ,' St. Paul will say (1 Cor. 2, 16), and again, 'Let that mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus' (Philip. 2, 5). 'And the knowledge with which Christ enlightens his followers is a knowledge joined with love: knowledge and love of the Father and, through Him, of all mankind. We are here at the fountainhead of faith and charity and all the elements which make man's union with God the unique relationship it is' (Dom A. Graham, *The Love of God*).

## CHAPTER 4

### THE GALILEAN MINISTRY

(continued)

*A.D. 28. June. Capharnaum. The Centurion's Servant (M. 8 ; L. 7)*

AFTER THE EVENTS just recorded, Jesus returned to Capharnaum and there he was asked by a centurion to cure his servant, who was paralysed and at the point of death. Jesus said,

I will come and heal him.

The centurion then made his famous reply, 'I am not worthy, Lord, that thou shouldst enter under my roof; but only say the word and my servant shall be healed.' As a soldier, he said, he knew what giving orders meant, and he recognized in Jesus the power to give such orders and to be obeyed. 'Jesus, hearing this, marvelled' and said to those with him,

Amen I say to you, in Israel I have not found so great faith. And I say to you, that many shall come from east and west, and shall feast with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of the heavens, but the children of the kingdom shall be cast forth into the outer darkness. There shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth. [To the centurion] Go, be it done to thee even as thou hast believed.

The centurion was an officer in the army, commanding a small unit, and was a Gentile, probably a Syrian or Arab. His servant was cured at the moment Jesus spoke the word of healing. According to Luke, Jesus did not speak with the centurion himself, but with Jewish elders whom the latter



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had sent to plead his cause. The supersession of the children of Abraham by the Gentiles became a prominent feature of Jesus' discourses in the last stage of his public life.

#### *The Widow's Son at Nain (L. 7)*

Shortly afterwards Jesus performed a still greater miracle—at Nain, which is about five miles from Nazareth. Only Luke records it, and the narrative is characteristic of his sympathetic style. As Jesus and the Twelve entered Nain, they met a funeral coming out. It was that of a widow's only son, and a great crowd of the townsfolk were accompanying the bereaved mother. It is again mentioned that Jesus manifested his human feelings. He 'was touched to the heart' by her grief, and said,

Weep not.

Then, stopping the cortège, he addressed the corpse saying,

Young man, I say to thee, arise!

And the youth sat up and began to speak, 'and he gave him to his mother'.

#### *John the Baptist's Question (M. 11; L. 7)*

Despite the enthusiasm with which Jesus had been received in Galilee, and the crowds which continued to gather wherever he went, there was no general recognition of him as the Messiah and but little comprehension of the new kingdom of God preached by him. We see a suggestion of this in Jesus' remark about the centurion, 'In Israel I have not found so great faith'. One obstacle was the preconceived idea of how a Messiah should act and the worldly ambitions which accompanied that idea. Jesus' behaviour was altogether different from what was generally expected, and even the

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well-disposed were puzzled. From his prison John the Baptist voiced the doubts which had reached him, and which he may have shared, though this is disputed. He sent two of his disciples to ask Jesus, 'Art thou he who is to come [i.e. the Messiah], or shall we look for another?' But publicly to declare himself the Messiah was just what Jesus would not do. The bare assertion of such a claim would have been at least ambiguous, because of the Jews' erroneous ideas about the Messiah. So he allowed John's messengers to watch him at his daily work of preaching and healing, and then said to them,

Go and report to John what ye have seen and heard: the blind see and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead rise and the poor are evangelized [have the gospel preached to them]; and blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in me [who does not lose confidence in me].

The prophet Isaiah had foretold that such wonders as these would mark the Messianic kingdom: 'Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall be free' (Chap. 35). The preaching to 'the poor' (cf. Chap. 3: The Beatitudes) was foretold in Isaiah's later prophecies (Chap. 61), to which Jesus often referred, for these foretold his Passion and redemptive death. Thus in effect Jesus replies to the Baptist, 'Yes, I am the Messiah, but not the kind of Messiah the Jews expect; I am the Messiah as foretold by Isaiah, and if you study the whole of his prophecy about me, you will see that there is nothing in my way of acting which should raise doubts in anyone's mind.' But, as usual, Jesus does not say this in so many words. He sets the enquirer on the right road and leaves him to find



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out the truth for himself, for true conviction is usually the fruit of personal effort, which God never fails to aid with his grace. Christ bade his followers not only, 'ask and ye shall receive', but, 'seek and ye shall find'. We may note that, besides being a fulfilment of prophecy, the miracles of healing were for the most part significant too of the spiritual change which Jesus wanted to bring about in men, to restore spiritual insight and understanding, to give new life to the soul and strengthen the feeble limbs so that men could walk in the narrow path of salvation.

When John's messengers had departed, Jesus paid a public tribute to his Forerunner. He said to the people, regarding John:

What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed swayed by the wind? Nay, what went ye out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Behold, they that wear soft garments are in the abodes of kings. (They that live in splendid garb and in luxury are in the palace—L.) Nay, why went ye out? To see a prophet? Yea, I say to you, and more than a prophet. This is he of whom it is written: 'Behold I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee'. Amen, I say to you, there hath not arisen among those born of women a greater than John the Baptist. Yet the least in the kingdom of the heavens (God—L.) is greater than he. But from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of the heavens is being assailed and assailants are for seizing upon it [or, is being taken by force, and the forceful enter into possession of it]. For all the prophets and the Law prophesied until John; and he, if ye will receive it, is the Elias who is to come. He that hath ears, let him hear.

John was the greatest of the prophets by reason of his office as Forerunner of the Messiah; as such, however, he belonged to the Old Dispensation, and Jesus stresses the superiority of

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the New Dispensation, which begins with himself, over the Old. The comparison here does not rest on personal holiness but on the nature of the two dispensations, that of the Law and the prophets and that of God's grace revealed in Jesus Christ. The forceful who press into the kingdom are those who were really responding to Our Lord's teaching, and notably 'the publicans and harlots', who, as Jesus later said to the Pharisees, 'are entering the kingdom of God before you'. Another interpretation is that the 'kingdom' is being persecuted. The parallel passage in Luke says: 'Upon hearing him [praise John] the whole people and the publicans justified God, having been baptized with the baptism of John; but the Pharisees and the lawyers, who had not been baptized by him, set at naught the counsel of God in their regard.' (cf. Chap. 8: Parable of the Two Sons.) Jesus continued,

But to what shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the market-places, who cry out to their playmates and say, 'We have piped to you and ye have not danced, we have lamented and ye have not mourned'. For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He hath a devil'. The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Behold, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!' And wisdom is justified by her works. (Wisdom is justified in all her children—L.)

The last sentence may mean that Divine Wisdom, as manifested in the respective conduct of John and Jesus, has been justified by results in each case. In Luke's version, the 'children' of Wisdom may be either John and Jesus, or the common people who honoured both, in contrast to the scribes and Pharisees who opposed them.

#### *The Sinful Woman (L. 7)*

Luke gives a striking example of the effect of Jesus'



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preaching upon sinners. Once, when he was reclining at table at the house of a Pharisee, Simon by name, a woman who was known throughout the town as a sinner—not necessarily a common prostitute—came in, carrying an alabaster jar of ointment and stood behind him, near his feet, weeping. Then she began to bathe his feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair, and kissed them, and anointed them with the ointment. Simon the Pharisee looked on disapprovingly, thinking to himself that if Jesus were really a prophet he would know what kind of woman this was and would not allow her to touch him. Jesus then said,

Simon, I have something to say to thee. . . . A certain creditor had two debtors; the one owed him five hundred denarii, the other fifty. As they had not wherewith to pay, he forgave both. Which of them, therefore, will love him more?

The Pharisee replied, 'He, I suppose, to whom he forgave more.' Jesus said,

Thou hast judged rightly. Thou seest this woman? I came into thy house: thou didst not pour water upon my feet: but she hath bathed my feet with her tears, and hath wiped them with her hair. Thou gavest me no kiss: but she from the moment I entered hath not ceased to kiss my feet. Thou didst not anoint my head with oil; but she hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say to thee, her many sins are [have been] forgiven, because she hath loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loveth little.

Simon the Pharisee had inferred in his own mind that Jesus was no prophet because he could not know 'what manner of woman' this was whom 'he allowed to touch him. Jesus answered his host's unspoken thought by pointing out how revealing was the woman's present behaviour toward him-

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self, and incidentally how revealing was Simon's very different behaviour, which was all the more marked as Jesus was his guest. Jesus then showed his complete knowledge both of the woman and of Simon by declaring that she possessed that love of God which immediately wins his forgiveness—we call it 'perfect contrition'—but that Simon had little real love of God in his soul, the reason being that he took credit to himself for his 'justness' instead of attributing it to God.

What is puzzling at first sight is that while the woman's tears and acts of devotion immediately suggest penitence, the parable seems to imply that she was showing gratitude for forgiveness already received. But the motives of living people are not so distinct and precise. This woman had no doubt heard Jesus preaching, heard from his lips the good news that God was ready and eager to pardon all sinners who should repent and believe in him (Jesus)—something at any rate of this 'gospel' she must have heard, and have taken to heart, and now she seizes the opportunity of throwing herself at Jesus' feet in a passion of sorrow, love, faith, trust and gratitude. All these sentiments are mingled in her soul and find expression in her acts of devotion. She is rewarded by hearing from Jesus' lips the longed-for words of forgiveness,

Thy sins are forgiven.

The men at table with him at once began to murmur inwardly, 'Who is this that even forgives sins?' But Jesus ignored them, and said to the woman,

Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.

This great penitent affords a beautiful example of the dispositions which render a soul pleasing to God—contrition, humility, love, gratitude, and especially faith in Jesus—just the dispositions which the typical Pharisee lacked.



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Some of the Fathers identified this anointing with that performed by Mary, the sister of Lazarus, during Jesus' last visit to Bethany (cf. Chap. 8: Jesus at Bethany), but the general opinion is that there were two anointings, although Dr. T. E. Bird (*A Study of the Gospels*, 1944) defends the former opinion. Many commentators, however, have held that it was the sister of Lazarus who anointed Jesus on both occasions, and moreover they identify her with Mary 'called the Magdalene, from whom seven devils were come forth' (L. 8). Thus Lebreton, Durand, Lattey and Pope (*Cath. Encycl.*, art. 'Mary Magdalene'), as also the Latin liturgy. On the other hand, Bossuet, Fillion, Knabenbauer, Prat and Lagrange hold that these were three different women, and Fillion claims for this opinion the support of 'great scholars like Estius, Tillemont, Calmet and Mabillon.' All one can say with certainty is that neither exegesis nor tradition affords a decisive answer to the question.

#### *Jesus' True Kindred (M. 12; Mk. 3; L. 8 and 11)*

Immediately after the episode of the woman who had been a sinner, Luke mentions that other women accompanied Jesus and his disciples as he toured Galilee preaching in every town and village: Mary Magdalene, Joanna, wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, Susanna, 'and many others who ministered to him of their possessions'. Some of these will always have been with the little band to attend to their needs. Nevertheless, the continual importunity of the crowds was a severe strain on Jesus. At times, 'they had no leisure even to take their food'. Jesus' relatives from Nazareth became alarmed on his account; they said, 'he is beside himself' and would have restrained him by force. When they came to Jesus, they found him surrounded by a crowd which was listening to his argument with some Pharisees. Eventually

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Jesus was told that his mother and his brethren wanted to speak with him. Jesus replied,

Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?

Then, indicating those sitting about him, he said,

Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever doth the will of my Father who is in the heavens (God—Mk.), he is my brother and sister and mother. (My mother and my brethren are they who hear the word of God and do it—L.)

On another occasion, after Jesus had been preaching, a woman in the crowd exclaimed aloud, 'Blessed is the womb that bore thee, and the breasts that thou didst suck!' Jesus answered,

Nay, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it.

From the moment he entered on his public ministry, Jesus knew no other family than that of the children of God, namely those who not only believed in God as their Father but lived as his children.<sup>1</sup> In Deuteronomy 33, 9, the Levite (member of the priestly tribe) is described as one 'who hath said to his father and to his mother: I do not know you. And to his brethren: I know you not . . .' In his infancy Jesus, although not a Levite by birth, had been offered to the Lord like the Levites (cf. Chap. 1), and, in the above sayings, 'the relations of Jesus with his mother are expressed in levitical terms. When He speaks of Mary with aloofness, evidently He is exemplifying the renunciation of family relations which was exacted from disciples' (Burrows, *op. cit.*). This was

<sup>1</sup> From the Gospel according to the Hebrews:

If ye be in my bosom [i.e. a close friend] and do not the will of my Father which is in heaven, out of my bosom will I cast you away.



not in the least incompatible with true filial affection (cf. Chap. 9: Jesus' Crucifixion). Besides, Mary herself was a child of God, and 'full of grace'.

*The Parables of the Kingdom*

In the Sermon on the Mount and similar discourses Jesus had made considerable use of the proverbial and parabolic style. This he developed into what are called the parables proper, i.e. simple incidents from everyday life which served to convey a spiritual truth to those capable of discerning it. Dr. Barry has pointed out (*Cath. Encycl.*, art. 'Parables') that a proverb may be defined as a contracted parable, and a parable as an expanded proverb, and he quotes this saying as verging on both: 'We have piped to you and ye have not danced; we have lamented, and ye have not mourned' (cf. Chap. 4: John the Baptist's Question). Proverbs and parables are familiar Oriental modes of teaching, and both are particularly well adapted to a simple, unlettered audience. The parables of Jesus are admitted by all to be masterpieces in this style of literature. They also show how wide and keen was Jesus' power of observation, embracing as they do every department of Jewish life.

There is reason to think that the adoption of parables as a regular method of teaching marked a deliberate change on Jesus' part due to the hostility aroused by the more direct method. This will appear from his conversation with the disciples after the Parable of the Sower. Eight of the recorded parables are concerned with 'the kingdom of God' and belong to this period of Jesus' ministry. Matthew, writing for Jews, avoided the use of the word 'God' by speaking always of the 'kingdom of the heavens'.

*The Sower Sowing His Seed (M. 13; Mk. 4; L. 8)*

Hear ye! Behold the sower went forth to sow (his

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seed—L.). And it came to pass that, as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside (and was trodden under foot—L.), and the birds (of the air—M.) came and ate it up. And some fell upon rocky ground, where it had not much soil, and straightway it shot up because it had no depth of soil (no moisture—L.); and when the sun rose it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered. And some fell among thorns [briers], and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. And other seed fell upon good soil, and it grew up and made increase and yielded fruit, and it bore thirty-fold, and sixty-fold, and a hundred-fold. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Both Matthew and Mark say that Jesus uttered this and other parables by the Lakeside, speaking from a boat to the crowd facing him on the beach. Afterwards, when they were alone, the disciples asked Jesus why he had taken to preaching in parables. He replied,

To you it hath been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens, but to them (that are without—Mk.) it hath not been given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall abound; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even what he hath. Wherefore I speak to them in parables; because seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah that saith: 'Hearing ye shall hear, but in no wise understand, and seeing ye shall see, but in no wise perceive; for the heart of this people is become gross, and their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest perchance they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart and turn again, and I heal them.' But blessed are your eyes, because they see, and your ears, because they hear. Amen I say to you, many prophets and just



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men (kings—L.) longed to see what ye see and they saw it not, and to hear what ye hear and they heard it not.

Mark and Luke give only a portion of Jesus' reply, and this makes him seem to say that he is speaking in parables in order *not* to be understood. These words, however, are from the prophecy of Isaiah, and we must first see what that means. From the nature of the case it is inevitable that every new means of salvation provided by God becomes at the same time a further cause of damnation to those who despise or ignore it. That is what Isaiah was referring to when he made God say in effect, 'Go and speak to the people that they may harden their hearts and may not be pardoned.' Similarly holy Simeon said to Jesus, 'This child is set for the fall and for the rise of many in Israel, and for a sign that shall be contradicted' (L. 2, 34). Now Jesus, having found the mass of the people impervious to his teaching, had decided to concentrate on the instruction of the Twelve and other close followers. He would continue to preach to all but making greater use of metaphors and parables, which attracted and pleased the people and at the same time instructed those capable of perceiving the spiritual lessons conveyed or led them to make further enquiries. He foresaw, however, that not many would penetrate beyond the story itself, and that is why he compared the result of this preaching with that of the prophet Isaiah.

According to Mark and Luke, the disciples asked for an explanation of the parable of the Sower, which Matthew also gives. Jesus said,

Know ye not [have you not understood] this parable?  
How then shall ye come to understand all the parables?  
Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God. When  
anyone heareth the word of the kingdom and under-

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standeth not, there cometh the evil one (the devil—L.; satan—Mk.) and catcheth up what was sown in his heart (lest by believing they be saved—L.). This is he that was sown by the wayside.

And he that was sown upon rocky ground is he that heareth the word and straightway receiveth it with joy; he hath no root in him, but is inconstant, and, when affliction or persecution cometh because of the word, straightway he is scandalized [his faith is soon shaken]. (In time of temptation, they fall away—L.)

And he that was sown among thorns is he that heareth the word, and the cares of the world and the glamour of riches (and cravings for other such things—Mk.; and the pleasures of life—L.) choke the word, and it is unfruitful (their fruit doth not ripen—L.).

And he that was sown upon good soil is he who heareth the word and understandeth; yea, he beareth fruit and yieldeth, one a hundredfold, another sixty, another thirty. (That in the good soil—these are they who with a right and good heart have heard the word, and hold fast thereto, and bear fruit in patience—L.)

In this parable Jesus touched on the greatest difficulty he had to face, namely, the absence in most of his hearers of those moral and spiritual dispositions without which his words and even his miracles could not produce their effect. He himself was the sower, scattering the seed of the word of God. The effect of his preaching, however, varied according to the disposition of the hearer. The superficial heard the word but did not take it in; the shallow might feel a momentary enthusiasm but were put off by the first difficulty; worldly people were too much occupied with business or pleasure to give it serious attention. Only the man whose heart was set on doing God's will received the word in the proper spirit, pondered over it, and turned it to good account.



*Jesus in His Own Words*

*The True and False Wheat (M. 13)*

The kingdom of the heavens is like to a man that sowed good seed in his field. But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed darnel [cockle, tares] also amid the wheat, and went his way. And when the blade shot up and brought forth fruit, then appeared likewise the darnel. And the owner's servants came to him and said, 'Master, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? Whence then the darnel?' And he said to them, 'An enemy hath done this'. They said to him, 'Wilt thou then that we go and gather it up?' But he said, 'Not so, lest perchance in gathering the darnel ye root up the wheat along with it. Let both grow together until the harvest. And at harvest-time I shall say to the reapers, Gather ye first the darnel, and bind it in bundles to burn; but the wheat gather ye into my barn.'

This parable too Jesus explained later to the disciples at their request:

He who soweth the good seed is the Son of Man: the field is the world: the good seed—these are the children of the kingdom: the darnel are the children of the evil one: the enemy who sowed it is the devil: the harvest is the consummation of the world: the reapers are the angels. As the darnel, therefore, is gathered and burnt up with fire, even so shall it be at the consummation of the world. The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather up from his kingdom all the scandals and the doers of iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth. Then shall the just shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He that hath ears, let him hear.

The Westminster Version uses the word 'darnel', because this noxious weed resembles wheat in the blade stage. While the parable of the sower stressed the importance of man's

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co-operation in the work of his salvation, this parable taught that man's salvation depends on factors external to himself: sound doctrine, the grace of God. It also illustrates the patience of God in permitting the wicked to co-exist with the good until the Final Judgment and teaches the good to be patient likewise. St. John Chrysostom argued from it against the slaying of heretics. It will be noticed that Jesus here used the word 'kingdom' in two senses, first as existing in this world, and then as existing in heaven. From the former it is legitimate to conclude that the Church on earth is not an invisible union of the just, but a visible community that includes both good and bad Christians. Not all who belong to the kingdom outwardly are 'children of the kingdom' inwardly. The Jews had expected the Messiah to make the separation of good and evil immediately; Jesus' mission, however, was not to judge men but to make them better. The Final Judgment would come later. 'Scandals' are actions which lead others into sin; Jesus will say on another occasion, 'Woe to the world because of scandals!' (cf. Chap. 5: Duty of Avoiding Occasions of Sin).

#### *The Seed Growing Secretly (Mk. 4)*

Thus is the kingdom of God, as when a man casteth seed upon the earth—night and day he sleepeth and riseth, and the seed is shooting up and growing, he knoweth not how. Of itself the earth beareth the crop—first the blade, then the ear, then the full-formed grain in the ear. But when the crop is ripe, straightway he sendeth forth [puts in] the sickle, for the harvest is ready.

Nature cannot be hurried, and neither can the work of God. The establishment of the 'kingdom' was not to be achieved in a violent or dramatic way, but by a gradual and steady process, which was God's secret as it was his work.



## *Jesus in His Own Words*

### *The Mustard-Seed (M. 13; Mk. 4; L. 13)*

To what are we to liken the kingdom of God, or in what parable to set it forth? It is like to a mustard-seed, which a man took and sowed in his field (garden—L.). Of all the seeds it is the least, but when it is grown up it is greater than the vegetables and becometh a tree (putteth forth great branches—Mk.), so that the birds of heaven come and dwell in the branches thereof (beneath the shade thereof—Mk.).

Small as the beginning of 'the kingdom' might be, it would grow and become great. The parable was to encourage those who could see no future for so apparently insignificant a movement.

### *The Leaven (M. 13; L. 13)*

The kingdom of the heavens is like unto leaven, which a woman took and covered over in a bushel of flour, till the whole was leavened.

The parable of the mustard-seed pointed to the future extension of 'the kingdom'; this parable showed the transformation which would be effected by the hidden power of God's word, the teaching of Christ. As St. Paul will say, 'the gospel is an instrument of God's power that brings salvation to all who believe in it' (Rom. 1, 16).

### *The Hidden Treasure and the Precious Pearl (M. 13)*

The kingdom of the heavens is like unto a treasure hid in the field, which a man findeth, and covereth; and in his joy he goeth and selleth all that he hath and buyeth that field.

Again, the kingdom of the heavens is like unto a merchant in search of goodly pearls; and when he hath found one pearl of great price, he goeth and selleth all that he hath and buyeth it.

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Both parables teach the same truth: a place in the kingdom is the supreme good, well worth every sacrifice to attain it. In the second, there may have been an appeal to the more intellectual: only the connoisseur can distinguish the rare pearl, and it was the truly wise man who would appreciate the sublimity of Christ's teaching.

#### *The Fisherman's Net (M. 13)*

Again, the kingdom of the heavens is like to a net cast into the sea, and gathering in fish of every kind; when it is filled, they haul it up on the beach, and sitting down they collect the good fish into baskets; but the worthless they throw away. Even so shall it be at the consummation of the world. The angels shall go forth and shall separate the wicked from the midst of the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.

Like the parable of the true and false wheat, this parable pictured 'the kingdom' on earth as a visible society, containing both good and bad members, a state of things which would continue until the Final Judgment.

#### *Comment on the Parables of the Kingdom (M. 13; Mk. 4; L. 8)*

In the above parables Jesus stressed features of 'the kingdom' which were contrary to the popular expectation. It was to be based on his teaching, the word of God, not on the traditions of the scribes; it would be interior as well as exterior; it would come gradually; it would develop by its own inherent power, even unnoticed by men; there would be evil in it side by side with good; it would be universal.

When explaining these parables to his disciples, Jesus told them in effect that their obscurity was only for a time, using



again the illustration of the lamp, used in the Sermon on the Mount:

No one lighteth a lamp and covereth it with a vessel or putteth it beneath a couch, but putteth it upon a lampstand, that they who enter may see the light. There is nothing hidden that shall not become manifest; nor secret, that shall not be known and come to light. Look to it, therefore, how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given: and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even what he thinketh he hath—L. (Look to what ye hear: for in what measure ye measure, it shall be measured unto you, and more shall be added unto you. For to him that hath shall be given; and from him that hath not shall be taken even what he hath—Mk.).

The truths contained in Our Lord's parabolic teaching would one day be taught plainly. The disciples therefore should listen attentively and reflect on what they heard. Upon this attention would depend the profit they would draw from his words, and their effort would be rewarded by yet further enlightenment.

At the conclusion of these parables, Jesus said, presumably to the disciples,

Have ye understood all these things?

They answered that they had, and Jesus said,

Therefore every scribe instructed in regard of the kingdom of the heavens is like to a householder who bringeth forth from his store new things and old.

Jesus was speaking of the future preachers of the gospel, of whom the disciples were to be the first.

*A.D. 28. Dec. The Calming of the Tempest (M. 8; Mk. 4; L. 8)*

On the same day that Jesus taught from the boat at the

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Lakeside by parables, when it was evening he said to the disciples,

Let us pass over to the other side of the lake.

So they set sail, and Jesus fell asleep, on the cushion in the stern. While they were crossing the Lake, a sudden storm arose—a not uncommon event—and the ship was in danger. But Jesus slept on, until the others awoke him saying, ‘Master, is it naught to thee that we are perishing? (Mk.) Lord, save us, we are perishing (M.).’ Then Jesus awoke, and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea,

Peace! be still!

And the wind fell, and there came a great calm. Then, turning to the disciples, Jesus said,

Why are ye afraid, O ye of little faith? (Have ye not yet faith?—Mk.; Where is your faith?—L.)

But the disciples could only ask one another in amazement, ‘What kind of man is this whom the winds and the sea obey?’

#### *The Demoniac and the Swine (M. 8; Mk. 5; L. 8)*

They landed on the eastern shore of the Lake, in the region of Decapolis (a group of ten Greek cities), in a locality called the district of the Gadarenes by Matthew and the district of the Gerasenes by Mark and Luke. Nearby there was a big herd of swine, feeding on the mountain side, about two thousand in number. Swine were held in abhorrence by the Jews as ‘unclean’ animals, but this was not Jewish country. Suddenly the party encountered a wild and dangerous demoniac—Matthew says there were two. Jesus said,

Thou unclean spirit, go out of the man.



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Then the possessed man replied, 'What have I to do with thee, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure thee by God, not to torment me.' Jesus asked him,

What is thy name?

And he answered, 'My name is Legion, for we are many. . . . If thou cast us out, send us into the herd of swine.' Jesus said,

Go.

And the devils went into the herd of swine, which thereupon ran violently down a steep place into the sea and were drowned. The swineherds fled and reported what had happened, and the people of the place came in terror and besought Jesus to leave their country. So Jesus prepared to depart, and the man who had been cured begged that he might go with him. But Jesus said,

Go thou home unto thine own, and tell them of all that the Lord hath done for thee, and how he took pity on thee.

This the man did, and the story spread throughout Decapolis, causing great wonder. This miracle has given rise to much discussion. But as God had permitted the devils to enter a man, so Jesus permitted them to enter the swine. In doing so he exercised that transcendent authority over creatures which belongs to the Creator; otherwise his action would seem to have been an injustice to the owners of the swine, or perhaps there was a reason for it which we are not told.

*The Woman with a Haemorrhage and Jairus' daughter (M. 9; Mk. 5; L. 8)*

On arriving back at Capernaum, Jesus found a great crowd awaiting him with one of the presiding officers of the

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local synagogue, Jairus by name. This man knelt before Jesus and told him that his only daughter, aged twelve, was dying, and he begged Jesus to come to his house and cure her. So Jesus accompanied him, and the crowd went along with them: on the way a woman who had suffered for twelve years from a chronic haemorrhage, which doctors had failed to cure, made her way through the crowd and managed to touch the tassel or fringe of Jesus' cloak, for she said, 'If I touch but his garments I shall be healed.' She was immediately healed, but Jesus, stopping, asked,

Who touched my garments?

Peter and the others thought this a strange question to ask, when they were in the middle of a crowd, but Jesus said,

Someone touched me, for I know that power hath gone forth from me!

Then the woman came forward in fear and trembling, and kneeling before Jesus related what had happened. Jesus said to her,

Be of good heart, daughter; thy faith hath healed thee.  
Go in peace, and be thou free from thine affliction.

At this moment, some persons came from Jairus' house to tell him that his daughter was dead. 'Trouble the Master no further,' they said. But Jesus said to him,

Fear not; only believe. Have but faith, and she shall be restored.

Arriving at the house, they found the relatives and hired mourners weeping and wailing. Jesus said to them,

Why make ye this tumult and lamentation? (Weep not—L.) Get ye hence; the maiden is not dead but sleepeth.



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But they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead. Jesus however turned them all out, and allowed only the girl's parents, and the disciples Peter, James and John, to accompany him into the room where the body was laid out. There, taking the child's hand, he said,

Talitha, cum [i.e. Maiden, arise].

And the girl got up and walked. Jesus told the parents to give her some food, and enjoined secrecy on the witnesses of the miracle, but the story spread through all the country round. A little earlier Jesus had told the former demoniac to publish abroad what had been done to him, but that was outside Jewish territory. In Galilee, Jesus seems to have wished to avoid public demonstrations, perhaps because these might have had, or have been regarded as having, a political significance.

*Two Blind Men Healed (M. 9)*

On leaving the house of Jairus, Jesus was followed by two blind men who cried out, 'Have pity on us, son of David.' When he had come into the house, the men entered too, and Jesus said to them,

Believe ye that I can do this?

They replied, 'Yea, Lord.' Then he touched their eyes, saying,

Be it done to you according to your faith.

And their eyes were opened. Jesus strictly charged them,

See that none know of it.

But as usual this charge was not heeded.

## *The Galilean Ministry*

*Jesus Ill-Received at Nazareth (M. 13; Mk. 6; L. 4)*

Jesus' next preaching tour took him to Nazareth, his home-town. And on the Sabbath he attended the synagogue as was his custom. The chronology varies here, and some divide this episode into two visits to Nazareth, assigning the discourse on Isaiah to a visit in May, A.D. 28, at the beginning of the Galilean ministry, and the bad reception and its sequel to a second visit in December of the same year. However, the Gospels do not mention two visits and we follow their account. The president of the synagogue asked Jesus to give the discourse, and the volume of Isaiah<sup>1</sup> was handed to him. Jesus selected what one might call his favourite prophecy of the Messiah:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he hath anointed me; to evangelize the poor he hath sent me, to proclaim to the captives release, and sight to the blind; to set the oppressed at liberty, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord [i.e. a year when men may find acceptance with God].

'The year' mentioned here was apparently a reference to the Jewish year of jubilee, when debts were remitted, captives freed and land restored. The Messianic age was to be a perpetual jubilee, when God's grace would be poured out on mankind. Rolling up the volume and returning it to the attendant, Jesus sat down and began his discourse with the words,

To-day in your hearing is this Scripture fulfilled.

The audience 'marvelled at the words of grace that came from his mouth.' But then they began to say, 'Is not this Joseph's son, the carpenter? Whence then hath he all these

<sup>1</sup> Just such a roll of Isaiah, attributed to the second century B.C., was discovered in a cave near Jericho in 1947. It consists of 17 sheets of rather coarse parchment, and has a length of over 23 feet and a height of 10½ inches.



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things? What is this wisdom that is given him? And these miracles which are wrought by his hands?' And they took offence at him. What really annoyed the Nazarenes was that this wonder-worker, of whom they had heard so much, had performed no miracles for them, his own townsfolk. They had no thought of accepting him as the Messiah—a mere carpenter whom they had known from childhood—but they felt they had a right to a demonstration of his alleged powers. Jesus said to them,

Doubtless ye will quote me this proverb: 'Physician, heal myself!' All the things that we have heard were wrought at Capharnaum, here also do in thine own country. Amen, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his own country. (A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country and among his own kinsfolk and in his own home—Mk.) Of a truth I tell you, many were the widows in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heavens were shut for three years and six months and there came a great famine all over the land, but unto none of them was Elias sent, save only to a widow of Zarephath in the region of Sidon. And many were the lepers in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet, but not one of them was cleansed, save only Naaman the Syrian.

This telling reminder that on two occasions in the past a Jewish prophet had worked a notable miracle in favour of a stranger, a Gentile, while his fellow-Jews mistrusted and persecuted him, infuriated the Nazarenes and caused a riot. Jesus was hustled out of the town, and worse might have followed had he not withdrawn at the right moment. 'He passed through their midst and went his way.' Matthew and Mark say that Jesus cured a few sick people at Nazareth, laying his hands upon them, but could not do more because of the general absence of faith, which was such as to surprise Jesus himself.

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*A.D. 29. March. Mission of the Twelve (M. 10; Mk. 6; L. 9)*

Though rejected by the Nazarenes, Jesus continued to visit towns and villages, teaching in the synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and infirmity. The condition of the people moved him to pity, because they seemed to be wandering helplessly like sheep that had no shepherd. He said to the disciples (M. 9),

The harvest is great, but the labourers are few; beg ye therefore the lord of the harvest to send forth labourers unto his harvest.

During the winter the peasants would not be away from home working in the fields, and Jesus chose this time to send out the Twelve, two by two, to preach the kingdom of God. He gave them power to heal the sick and to cast out devils from the possessed, and said to them,

Take ye not the way of the gentiles [roads leading to Gentile country], neither enter ye a town of the Samaritans; but go ye rather unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of the heavens is at hand.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out the devils; freely ye have received, freely give. Possess not gold, nor silver, nor copper in your girdles; no wallet for the journey (nor bread—L.), nor two tunics, nor shoes, nor a staff; for the labourer is worthy of his maintenance. [They were to be shod with sandals and might carry a staff—Mk.] Whatsoever town or village ye enter, find out who therein is worthy; and there stay until ye quit the place. And upon entering the house, salute it: and if the household be worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it be unworthy, let your peace return unto you! And whosoever will not receive you, nor listen to your words, go ye forth outside that house or town, and shake off the dust from your feet for a witness against them. Amen, I say to you, it shall



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be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorra in the day of judgment than for that town. Behold, I send you forth as sheep into the midst of wolves. Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and guileless as doves.

The Twelve went on their mission, and they preached repentance and cast out many devils, and 'anointed many sick with oil' and healed them.

#### *Death of the Baptist—Herod and Jesus (M. 14; Mk. 6; L. 9)*

While the Twelve were engaged in this mission, news was brought to Jesus by some of John the Baptist's disciples that their Master had been beheaded in prison by Herod's orders, and that they had given him burial. Later, Herod Antipas heard about Jesus and was curious to see him. He even wondered whether this was not John the Baptist returned to life.

Partly on account of the news about the Baptist and partly to give the disciples some rest after their preaching tour, Jesus said to the Twelve on their return,

Come ye apart by yourselves unto a desert place and rest awhile.

So they took ship from Capharnaum and made for the north of the Lake, near Bethsaida. But the crowd soon discovered where they had gone and followed them by land. Jesus, seeing a great number gathered, took pity on them, and preached to them, and healed their sick.

#### *A.D. 29. April. Feeding of the Five Thousand (M. 14; Mk. 6; L. 9; J. 6)*

When evening was come, the disciples suggested to Jesus that he should tell the people to go to the nearby farms and

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villages to obtain food and lodging for the night. Jesus replied,

They have no need to depart. Do ye give them to eat.

What followed is the only miracle recorded by all four Evangelists, and according to the fourth Evangelist, Jesus said to Philip,

Whence are we to buy loaves that these may eat?

He said this, adds John, to try him, for he himself knew what he was about to do. Philip replied that two hundred drachmas would not buy enough bread, even to give each a little. Jesus then said to them,

How many loaves have you? Go ye and see.

They told him, 'Five barley loaves and two fishes.' He said,

Bring them hither to me.

and then,

Make the men lie down. Make them recline in parties of about fifty.

There were about five thousand men there, besides women and children, and they sat down in ranks, by hundreds and fifties. Jesus took the loaves, and looking up to heaven, blessed them and then broke and distributed them to the disciples, and likewise the fishes, and they distributed them to the crowd. When all had eaten to their satisfaction, Jesus said to the disciples,

Gather up the fragments that are left over, that nothing may be lost.

They did so, filling twelve baskets with what remained over of the bread and fish thus miraculously multiplied.



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*Attempt to Force a Political Rôle on Jesus (J. 6)*

This miracle led to a movement on the part of those who had benefited by it to 'carry Jesus off to make him king'. Thus it brought to a head the popular enthusiasm which hoped for a temporal triumph on the part of the Messiah, and looked to Jesus to fill this rôle. It was probably to avoid such complications that Jesus had observed a marked reticence on the subject of his Messiahship, and had spoken only of 'the kingdom' and but little of his own part in it. Now, Jesus made the disciples embark and start off without him. After they had gone, he himself withdrew from the crowd and went up the hillside alone to pray.

*Jesus Walks Upon the Water (M. 14; Mk. 6; J. 6)*

The disciples had to row against the wind through a rough sea and were making slow progress, when, in the middle of the night, Jesus himself came to them, walking on the water. At first, they thought it was an apparition and were terrified. But Jesus called out,

Be of good heart. It is I, fear not.

Then Peter replied, 'Lord, if it be thou, bid me come to thee upon the waters.' Jesus said,

Come.

Then Peter climbed out of the boat and began walking on the water towards Jesus. But, seeing how strong the wind was, he lost courage and at once began to sink. He called out to Jesus, 'Lord, save me,' and Jesus came to him and caught hold of him, saying,

O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?

And they both got into the ship, and the wind dropped.

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Matthew says that those in the ship knelt down before Jesus saying, 'Truly thou art Son of God.' Mark on the other hand stresses their bewilderment: 'They were utterly beside themselves with astonishment [at seeing Jesus walking on the water]; for they had not understood touching the loaves, but their heart was hardened.' Their faith was still imperfect, probably because they shared their fellow-countrymen's misconceptions regarding the rôle to be played by the Messiah.

#### *Sermon on the Bread of Life (J. 6)*

The crowd which had been left behind on the shore near Bethsaida were still looking for Jesus the next morning, as they had seen only one boat leave the night before, taking the disciples without Jesus. However, boats put in, and some people were able to sail back to Capharnaum, whither others no doubt had returned by land. The more determined eventually found Jesus at Capharnaum, and asked him in astonishment how he had come there. Jesus answered,

Amen, amen, I say to you, ye seek me, not because ye have seen signs, but because ye ate of the loaves and were filled. Work not for the food which perisheth, but for the food which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you; for upon him hath the Father, God himself, set his seal.

They had failed to learn from the miracle to give Jesus their faith and to learn from him the truth about the kingdom. The miracle itself was the seal proving that Jesus' mission was from God. 'Bread of life' here is like the 'living water' which Jesus offered to the Samaritan woman (cf. Chap. 2: The Woman at Jacob's Well). They said to him, 'What are we to do, in order that we may work the works of God?' Jesus answered,



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This is the work of God, that ye believe in him whom he hath sent.

Thus, in opposition to the typically Jewish idea of obtaining salvation by the performance of prescribed works, Jesus affirmed the primary need of faith in himself. They then asked for a sign to prove Jesus' claim to belief in himself, adding, 'Our fathers ate the manna in the desert, as it is written "Bread from heaven he gave them to eat."' Jesus said,

Amen, amen, I say to you, Moses gave you not the bread from heaven, but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life to the world.

'Lord,' they said, 'give us this bread always!' Jesus replied,

I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth in me shall never thirst. But I have said to you that ye have seen me and believe not. All that the Father giveth to me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out; because I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him who sent me. Now this is the will of him who sent me, that I lose nothing of all that he hath given me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that every one who beholdeth the Son and believeth in him have everlasting life, and that I raise him up on the last day.

Jesus' teaching is the word of God—recall the parable of the sower—and he is himself the Word of God, uttered in human language, by becoming man. Both his teaching and he himself are the 'bread from heaven', that 'giveth life to the world'. The Jews could understand a prophet speaking of his teaching as 'the bread of life', but they were disconcerted by the

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claims which Jesus made for himself. They had yet to learn that the only way to God was through the Son, whom he had sent into the world, and that to believe in the Son and surrender oneself to him was itself a Divine grace, only given to those who had the right dispositions, humility, penitence, etc. In return for their faith, Jesus offered them life, supernatural life, which would carry the believer into eternal bliss. Recall his word to the Samaritan woman, 'The water that I shall give him shall become in him a fountain of water springing up unto everlasting life.' But the Jews were demurring to Jesus' assertion of his Divine origin. They argued, 'Is this not Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How doth he now say, "I am come down from heaven!"' Jesus continued,

Murmur not among yourselves. No one can come to me, unless the Father that sent me draw him; and I will raise him up on the last day. It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught of God.' Every one that hath heard and learned from the Father cometh to me. Not that any one hath seen the Father, save he who is from God, he hath seen the Father. Amen, Amen, I say to you, he that believeth hath everlasting life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the desert, and they died; this is the bread come down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die. I am the living bread come down from heaven. If any one eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world.

In the concluding sentence of the above paragraph, there is a manifest development of thought: Jesus had previously spoken of himself as the incarnation of Divine Truth, in which men must believe; here he begins to speak of himself as a future sacrifice and sacrificial meal for the life of the world. From this verse onwards, as St. John Chrysostom noted, the dis-



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course becomes definitely Eucharistic. The development, however, is perfectly natural. Jesus was in fact to be man's 'bread of life' in two ways—as teacher of Divine truth and as sacramental food of the new life imparted to believers. It is through faith and through the sacraments that man is linked up effectively with the mystery of Christ's death, and makes its fruits his own. Reading it in the light of subsequent events, the meaning is clear enough; but at the time the words were spoken, they must have appeared wildly improbable to all but those who wholeheartedly believed in Jesus. But the objection that was immediately raised—'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?'—shows that his hearers understood that Jesus intended his words to be taken literally. Jesus continued even more emphatically,

Amen, amen, I say to you, unless ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have not life in you. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath everlasting life; and I will raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and as I live because of the Father, so he that eateth me, he also shall live because of me. This is the bread come down from heaven: not as the fathers ate and died: he that eateth this bread shall live for ever.

The discourse proper, as recorded by John, ends here. Few to-day question the Eucharistic character of the doctrine exposed by Our Lord in the last part of the discourse. But some commentators, including Catholics, ask how this doctrine could have been given in public at Capharnaum at this time, since it must necessarily have been unintelligible to most of the audience. Fr. Lagrange adopts a suggestion made by Dr. Ruch, Bishop of Strasbourg, in the *Dictionnaire de Théologie*,

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namely, that the evangelist may have grouped together here Our Lord's teachings on the 'Bread of Life', which in fact were given at various times. It is recognized that Matthew did something similar in the Sermon on the Mount. If this is so, the specifically Eucharistic teaching may have been given to a more intimate audience of Jesus' followers at a later date. In that case, both discourses were followed by defections, the first on the part of those Galileans who had wished Jesus to appear as a king, the second on the part of many of Jesus' disciples.

#### *Defection of Many Disciples (J. 6)*

After hearing Jesus' promise of the Eucharist, many of the disciples said, 'This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?' Jesus said to them,

Doth this scandalize you [i.e. make you waver in your allegiance]? What then if ye should behold the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the spirit which giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing. The words which I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But there are among you some that believe not. For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to me unless it be given him of the Father.

This is a difficult passage, possibly, as Fr. Lebreton suggests, because the sayings were made in answer to interpolations and discussions which the evangelist has omitted. Fr. Lagrange gives this interpretation: 'Jesus asks them to trust him for the meaning of his words, which are spirit—that is, past human understanding—and yet are life, with a spiritual life that is necessarily mysterious. He has often repeated that he has come down from heaven. They are loath to believe it. But suppose they see him going up to where he was before, will



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not that convince them? Let them have patience then. It is the spirit which gives the life of which he has spoken: the flesh, with all that the word implies of change, corruption and mortality, the flesh of itself would profit nothing.' According to Fr. Burrows (op. cit.), Jesus is insisting 'that the (Eucharistic) Flesh and Blood belong to one who descended from heaven—whereas the Jews say "whose father and mother we know"—and vivify by virtue of the Spirit.'

Nevertheless, 'after this many of Jesus' disciples withdrew and walked no more with him.' How serious the defection was is clear from the question Jesus put to the Twelve,

Do ye also wish to depart?

As usual, Simon Peter made himself the spokesman of all, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of everlasting life; and we have come to believe and to know that thou art the Holy One of God.' The essential here is the declaration of loyalty—they will not withdraw from Jesus. The act of faith supports this declaration, but it is not yet the full Christian faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. 'The Holy One of God' is equivalent to 'the elect of God, destined for a special mission and associated with God's holiness' (Lagrange). Jesus said,

Have I not chosen you, the twelve? Yet one of you is a devil.

## CHAPTER 5

### VISIT TO JERUSALEM—END OF GALILEAN MINISTRY

*A.D. 29. June. Visit to Jerusalem (J. 5)*

THE DATES OF the events just recorded and those which follow here cannot be fixed with absolute certainty, but, following reliable commentators like Lagrange and others, who discuss the question at length in their works, we assume that the 'Feeding of the Five Thousand' took place shortly before the Passover of A.D. 29, and that afterwards Jesus went up to Jerusalem for 'a Jewish Feast', which was either the Passover just mentioned, or more probably the Feast of Pentecost, in June. The Jewish Pentecost was the offering of the first-fruits of the harvest; it was so called because it took place fifty days after the Passover.

#### *Cure of Sick Man at the Pool*

In Jerusalem, Jesus happened to pass by a certain pool, called Bethzatha, which was surrounded by a colonnade, where many sick persons were lying. The surface of the pool became agitated from time to time, and there was a popular belief that when this occurred the first sick person to enter the pool was always cured. The statement that the movement of the water was caused by an angel was not in the original text of the gospel. Jesus noticed there a man who had been disabled for thirty-eight years, and said to him,

Wilt thou be made whole?

The man replied that he could never reach the pool first. Jesus said,



### *Jesus in His Own Words*

Arise, take up thy pallet, and walk.

Which the cured man at once did. But it was the Sabbath, and he was soon stopped and asked how he came to be carrying a burden on the Sabbath. He told his story, but he could not give Jesus' name, which he did not know. Later, Jesus met him again in the Temple, and said to him,

Behold, thou art become whole: sin no more, lest something worse befall thee.

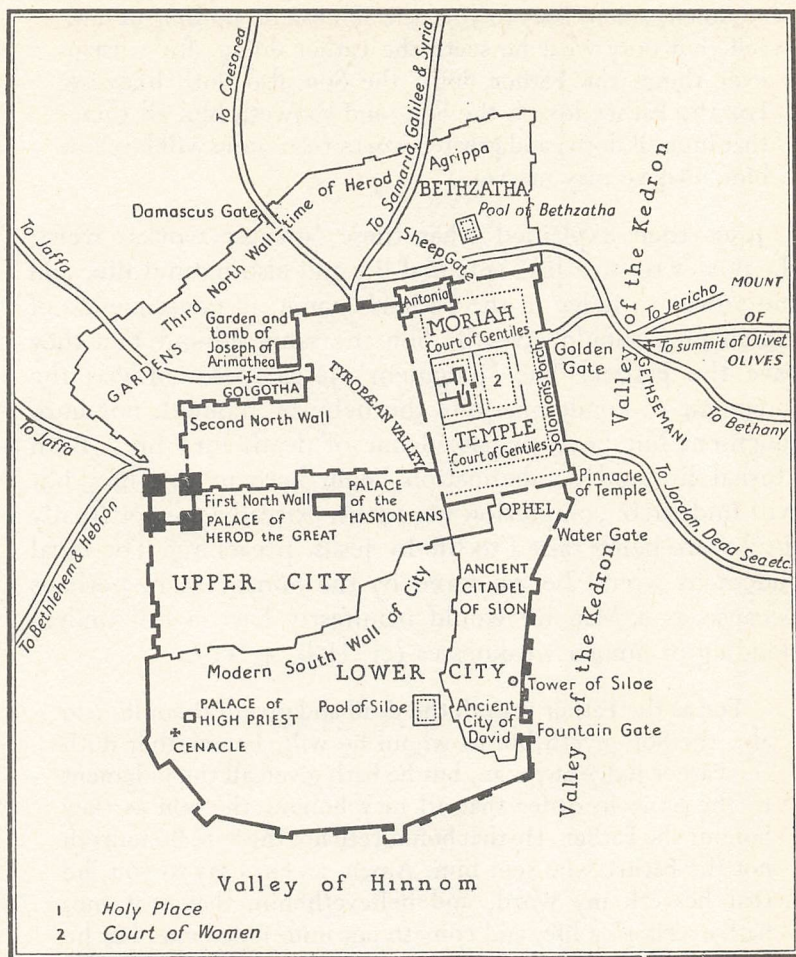
#### *'The Son of God'*

The man was now able to give the name of his healer, and the usual outcry arose against Jesus because he did these things on the Sabbath. Jesus answered his critics,

My Father worketh until now, and I work.

The Sabbath rest was based on the statement in Genesis that God 'rested on the Sabbath day from all his work which he had done' in creating the universe. Nevertheless, as Jesus reminded them, God never ceases his work of conserving and governing his creation. By healing men's bodies and souls, even on the Sabbath, Jesus, therefore, was only following God's example. The Jews, however, perceived that Jesus was in fact claiming an extraordinary and unique relationship between God and himself. They became more determined than ever to make away with him, because he not only attacked their interpretation of the Sabbath but 'said that God was his own Father, making himself equal with God.'

Jesus did not take up the question of his equality with God, but he continued to speak of himself as 'the Son of God', and defended his right to act and speak as he did, pointing out that he did not act on his own initiative but only did what he saw the Father doing. His special knowledge of God's ways was the fruit of the Father's love for the Son.



Plan of Jerusalem



### *Jesus in His Own Words*

Amen, amen, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of himself, but only what he seeth the Father doing; for whatsoever things the Father doth, the Son also doth likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doth; and greater works than these will he show him, that ye may marvel.

Jesus then explained what these 'greater works' were: the power to give life, spiritual life and also natural life, and the power to judge in the Father's name, in consequence of which men should give the Son the same honour that they gave the Father. The 'judgment' Jesus spoke of was the judgment of condemnation; the believer 'cometh not unto judgment but he hath passed out of death into life.' Both eternal life and condemnation begin here in this life, but will find their completion hereafter. Already the spiritually dead were being raised to life by Jesus' preaching. The Final Judgment would be rendered by the Son of Man, perhaps because as a Man he would manifestly have a full understanding of human weaknesses (cf. Heb. 4, 15).

For as the Father raiseth the dead and giveth them life, so also the Son giveth life to whom he will. For neither doth the Father judge any man, but he hath given all the judgment to the Son; in order that all may honour the Son as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father who sent him. Amen, amen, I say to you, he that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and cometh not unto judgment; but he hath passed out of death into life. Amen, amen, I say to you, the hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself, so he hath given to the Son also, to have life in himself; and he hath given him power to do judgment, because he is the Son of Man. Marvel not at

*Visit to Jerusalem—End of Galilean Ministry*

this; because the hour cometh, when all in the tombs shall hear his voice and come forth, they that have done good unto resurrection of life, but they that have done evil unto resurrection of judgment. Of myself I can do nothing; as I hear I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not mine own will, but the will of him who sent me.

Jesus then gave a list of witnesses, who supported these claims which he had just made, namely: God the Father, John the Baptist, Jesus' own works, God speaking from heaven at the Baptism, and the Jewish Scriptures, in particular those of Moses:

If I bear witness concerning myself, my witness is not true; there is another who beareth witness concerning me, and I know that the witness is true which he witnesseth concerning me. Ye have sent unto John, and he hath borne witness to the truth. Not that it is from man that I receive my witness; but these things I say that ye may be saved. He was the burning and shining lamp, and ye were willing to rejoice for a while in his light. But the witness which I have is greater than John's; for the works which the Father hath given me to accomplish, these very works which I do, these bear witness concerning me that the Father hath sent me. And the Father who sent me, himself hath borne witness concerning me. Ye have never heard his voice, neither have ye ever seen his form; and ye have not his word abiding in you, for him whom he hath sent ye believe not. Search ye the Scriptures, because in them ye think to have everlasting life; and these are they that bear witness of me, yet ye are not willing to come to me, that ye may have life. I receive not glory from men; but I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. I am come in the name of my Father, and ye receive me not; if another come in his own name, him ye will receive. How can ye believe, ye who receive glory from one another, but seek not the glory that is from the only God? Think not



### *Jesus in His Own Words*

that I shall accuse you to the Father; your accuser is Moses, in whom is your hope. For if ye believed Moses, ye would believe me; for he wrote concerning me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?

In his earlier public preaching, in Galilee, Jesus had spoken exclusively of 'the kingdom' and of the Fatherhood of God, observing a marked reticence about his own relationship to God as well as his rôle in 'the kingdom', although he both spoke and acted 'with authority', and opposed his interpretation of the Law to that of the scribes and Pharisees. Here at Jerusalem, and henceforward in his utterances there, he developed the theme of his own Sonship of God—'*My Father*' as he emphatically called him—and showed that his Sonship was intimately connected with the new 'kingdom' and his work as Messiah. Thus, in the above discourse, he revealed that, as Son of Man who was also the beloved Son of God, he enjoyed a unique insight into God's ways, was himself the source of spiritual renewal for men, and equally of condemnation for those who refused to listen to him, and was to be God's representative in the Final Judgment, a fact that entitled him to equal honour with God—Jesus' frequent reference to this function of the 'Son of Man' is evidently a reference to the prophecy of Daniel 'and the Parables of Henoch' (cf. Chap. 2: The Son of Man). Although Jesus spoke of himself as his hearers saw him, a Man, these claims clearly indicated that he was no ordinary man, that indeed he was much more than a mere man. As usual, however, Jesus was content to drop a broad hint, which the more discerning could develop for themselves, or make the subject of further interrogation. But the Jews would not receive his message, and the reason, Jesus told them, was that they had not the love of God in them. For the same reason they were not true disciples of Moses.

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A.D. 29. June. In Galilee. Pharisaic Opposition. (M. 15; Mk. 7; L. 6)

Jesus' life was no longer safe in Judaea, but he had still much to do before allowing his enemies to have their will with him, and he returned to Galilee. Scribes and Pharisees, however, followed him there and continued to heckle him in public. Matthew and Mark report a tour of villages and towns south of Capharnaum—the Plain of Genezareth—where many sick were brought to Jesus and cured by him; whether this took place before or after the visit to Jerusalem just related is not clear.

The Pharisees who had come from Jerusalem to keep Jesus under observation soon found matter for criticism. They noticed that his Galilean disciples showed laxity in regard to the rules laid down by the scribes about the washing of hands before taking food. They asked Jesus how it was that his disciples thus violated the tradition of the elders? Jesus replied,

How is it ye too transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? (Full well ye reject the commandment of God, to keep your own tradition—Mk.) For God (Moses—Mk.) said, 'Honour thy father and thy mother'; and, 'He that revileth father or mother let him die the death.' But ye say, 'Whosoever shall say to his father or mother, Whatsoever of mine might profit thee is *corban* [that is, 'given to God']—he shall not honour his father and mother (thenceforth ye suffer him no more to do aught for his father or mother—Mk.). So ye have made void the word of God for the sake of your tradition, which ye have handed down. And many such things ye do.

Evidently, Jesus was referring to some piece of casuistry by which the scribes allowed men to evade the duty of contributing to the support of their parents. He continued,



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Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, 'This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me, in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines precepts of men.' Ye let go the commandment of God and hold fast the tradition of men.

Then, addressing the crowd, Jesus said,

Hear me, all, and understand. It is not what entereth the mouth that defileth a man, but what cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man. (There is naught outside a man which by entering him can defile him; but the things that come out of a man, these are what defile a man—Mk.)

When the disciples told Jesus that the Pharisees professed themselves scandalized by what he had said, he replied,

Every plant that my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be uprooted. Let them be; they are blind guides of the blind. If a blind man lead a blind man, they shall both fall into a pit. (Can the blind lead the blind? Will not both fall into a pit?—L.)

Peter asked him to explain further what he had said about food and defilement. Jesus said to them,

Are ye also still without understanding? Do ye not see that whatsoever entereth the mouth passeth into the belly, and is cast out into the privy? (It entereth not his heart but his belly—Mk.) But the things that come out of the mouth come forth from the heart, and these defile a man. For from the heart come forth wicked purposes—murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies (covetings, malice, guile, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. All these wicked things come from within—Mk.). These are what defile a man; but to eat with unwashed hands doth not defile a man.

On a later occasion Jesus again attacked the Pharisees on this

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point of ceremonial ablutions (cf. Chap. 7: Against Pharisaic Hypocrisy).

*A.D. 29. June. In Phoenicia. The Syro-phoenician Woman (M. 15; Mk. 7)*

In face of the too-worldly outlook of the ordinary people and the hostility of their leaders, Jesus concentrated his efforts on the instruction of the Twelve, and perhaps for this purpose took them off on long journeys during which he could talk to them alone. Thus, the whole party now travelled northwards and beyond Galilee, into Phoenicia, reaching the neighbourhood of Tyre and Sidon. Jesus did not want his visit to be known, but it could not be kept secret; and so it was that a woman of the locality, whose daughter was possessed by an unclean spirit, came begging him to cure her. Jesus took no notice of her, and she followed them, appealing for help. The disciples begged Jesus to do what she asked and get rid of her. But he said,

I have been sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

When, however, they stopped to enter a house, the woman was still there and she came in and threw herself at Jesus' feet, saying, 'Lord, help me.' He said to her,

Suffer first the children to have their fill; for it is not good to take the bread of the children and cast it to the dogs.

It is evident from the woman's witty reply that these words did not appear as harsh to her as they sound to the modern reader. She answered, 'Yea, Lord, for indeed the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their masters' table.' Then Jesus said to her,

O woman, great is thy faith; be it done to thee as thou



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desirest. (Because of that word, go; the devil hath gone out of thy daughter—Mk.)

And, returning home, she found her daughter cured.

*A.D. 29. July. In Decapolis. Cure of Deaf-Mute (Mk. 7)*

From Phoenicia Jesus seems to have made a detour which brought him to Decapolis, east of the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan. There Jesus' presence became known because of his cure of a deaf-mute. Mark relates the miracle in detail. Taking the man aside, Jesus thrust his fingers into his ears, and touched his tongue with spittle; then, looking up to heaven, he sighed, and said to him,

*Ephphatha* [Be thou opened].

And immediately the man was able to hear and speak. Jesus charged them not to speak of the miracle, but there was no keeping it quiet, and soon he was surrounded by crowds bringing their sick.

*Feeding of the Four Thousand (M. 15 and 16; Mk. 8)*

Near the Lake Jesus remained teaching the people and healing the sick for three days. On the third day, he said to the disciples,

I feel compassion for the multitude, for they have remained with me now three days, and have not anything to eat. And I am unwilling to send them away fasting, lest they faint on the way; and some of them are from afar.

The reply of the disciples was: 'Whence in a wilderness can we provide bread enough to satisfy so great a multitude? (How could any man provide bread for all these, here in a wilderness?—Mk.)' This question has led some scholars to conclude that the present account is another version of the

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previous miracle of multiplication of bread. But both miracles are given by Matthew and Mark, and later Jesus will speak of them as two separate events. By their reply, then, the disciples may merely have meant that it was beyond *their* power to feed the multitude, implicitly leaving it to Jesus to do so, as he had done before. This at any rate Jesus proceeded to do. He asked,

How many loaves have ye?

They said, 'seven'. He then gave orders that the people should sit down, took the loaves, uttered a thanksgiving, and broke the loaves into pieces, which he gave to the disciples to distribute. There were also 'a few small fishes' which Jesus blessed and gave to be served out. Everyone was satisfied, and there was still enough left to fill seven baskets. The crowd numbered about four thousand men, besides the women and children.

Having fed them, Jesus dismissed the multitude, and took ship with the disciples. They landed near a city—it is not certain which—but some Pharisees from the city came to dispute with Jesus. They asked him to give them 'a sign from heaven'. It was presumably a Messianic sign that the Pharisees were asking for. Jesus had not as yet publicly declared himself the Messiah, and the Pharisees, irritated by the miracles of one who attacked their teaching, wanted to know whether Jesus intended to make that claim. They were 'tempting him'. Jesus, 'sighing deeply in his spirit', replied,

Why doth this generation seek a sign? Amen, I say to you, a sign shall not be given to this generation (Mk.).

Overnight ye say, 'It will be fine, for the sky is red'; and of a morning, 'Today there will be bad weather, for the sky is red and lowering.' The face of the heavens ye can read indeed, but the signs of the times ye cannot. A wicked and



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adulterous generation seeketh for a sign, and a sign shall not be given it, except the sign of Jonah (M.).

There is a proverb in English: 'Red sky at night, shepherd's delight; red sky in the morning, shepherd's warning.' On other occasions Jesus used the comparison of Jonah in reply to similar requests (cf. Chap 7: The Sign of Jonah). The party again took ship, leaving so hurriedly that the disciples forgot to reprovision it with food. So when Jesus, still thinking of the Pharisees, said to them,

Take heed, and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees (and of the leaven of Herod!—Mk.)

they thought he was referring to the bread they had forgotten to buy. But he said to them,

Why do ye remark to one another that ye have no bread? (Why do ye discuss among yourselves, O ye of little faith, that ye have no bread—M.) See ye not yet, nor understand? Is your heart hardened? Have ye eyes, and see not? Have ye ears, and hear not? And do ye not remember? When I brake the five loaves for the five thousand, how many basketfuls of fragments took ye up? . . . When I brake the seven for the four thousand, how many basketfuls of fragments took ye up? . . . Do ye not yet understand? (How is it that ye understand not that I spoke not to you about bread? Nay, beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees!—M.)

They then understood that Jesus was putting them on their guard against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A Saying quoted by Clement of Alexandria and many others:

Be ye approved money-changers.

St. Paul's: 'Test all things, hold fast the good' (1 Thess. 5, 20) shows its meaning. Other reported Sayings are:—

A man that is not tempted is not approved. No man that is not tempted shall obtain the kingdom of heaven.

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*A.D. 29. July. Bethsaida. Cure of Blind Man (Mk. 8)*

At Bethsaida, a blind man was brought to Jesus, and again Mark alone records the miracle with its curious details. Jesus took the man by the hand and led him out of the town. Then, after spitting on his eyes and laying his hands on him, he asked him,

Dost thou see anything?

The man replied, 'I see men; I see them as though they were trees, but walking about.' Apparently the man had become blind in childhood and still remembered having seen trees. Jesus then again laid his hands upon his eyes, and the man was able to distinguish objects clearly, even at a distance. Jesus sent him home, telling him,

Do not even enter the village.

Jesus' intention presumably was to keep him from talking about his cure.

*A.D. 29. July. Caesarea Philippi. Peter's Profession of Faith. (M. 16; Mk. 8; L. 9)*

From Bethsaida, the party again travelled northwards as far as Caesarea Philippi, a city built by the Tetrarch Philip and named after Caesar Augustus. On this journey, there occurred an episode which marked another stage in the establishment of 'the kingdom'. As at other critical moments in his public life, Jesus had recourse to prayer. Then, when the disciples joined him, he turned and asked them,

Whom do men say that I am?

They replied, 'Some John the Baptist, others Elias, others Jeremias or one of the former prophets, risen again.' Then Jesus put the crucial question,



But whom say ye that I am?

'The time has come,' says Fr. Lagrange, 'when Jesus, to fulfil his Father's purpose, has resolved to determine perfectly clearly the relations between himself and his disciples. . . . There is a strong temptation to think that, notwithstanding their very intimate and affectionate relations, there was a doubt (as to whether Jesus was really the Messiah) still weighing on their minds. Jesus therefore urges them to speak openly to him, to reveal to him their thoughts. Once he has got them firmly to agree that he is the Messiah foretold by the Scriptures, he will tell them what God expects of the Messiah, and what God demands from those who resolve to follow the Messiah.'

It was Peter who gave the answer Jesus desired. All three evangelists report that his reply was an unhesitating acknowledgment that Jesus was the Messiah: 'Thou art Christ' (M.); 'Thou art the Christ' (Mk.); 'The Christ of God' (L.). There was no expression of dissent or doubt from the others, and Jesus evidently understood them to be of one mind with Peter in the matter. Nevertheless, the act of faith in the Messiah was Peter's own. Nor was that all. Matthew, who was presumably present himself, has recorded Peter's words in a fuller form which, together with Jesus' reply to them, immensely adds to their significance. 'Simon Peter answered and said: Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' And Jesus answered,

Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah [Son of Jonah], because flesh and blood hath not revealed this to thee, but my Father in the heavens. And I do say to thee, Thou art Peter [*Kepha*, Rock], and upon this rock [*Kepha*] I will build my church, and the gates of hell [Hades] shall not prevail against it. I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of the heavens; and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth shall be bound in the

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heavens, and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth shall be loosed in the heavens.

Thus, Peter declared his faith in Jesus not only as the Messiah but as *the* Son of God. This was the first clear act of faith in Our Lord's Divinity. Jesus immediately expressed the deepest satisfaction at Peter's reply; and his use of the phrase 'Son of Jonah' as a parallel to Peter's 'Son of God' put the emphasis on this part of Peter's profession. It was surely this especially which was the fruit of a special grace from heaven.

There was also parallelism between Peter's 'Thou art the Christ' and Jesus' 'Thou art the Rock on which I will build my church'. Jesus himself had given Simon the name of 'Rock' (cf. Chap. 2: First Disciples), but, as in the Old Testament examples of Abraham and Josue, 'when God changes a man's name, this is not to signify something that that man ought to be or aim at being but rather that God has made him to be what that name signifies' (Fr. Hugh Pope). Thus Simon is not only to be called but he *is* the Rock on which Christ will build his church. The word 'church' means assembly (and later came to be used also of the building in which the faithful assemble). 'The assembly of Israel' was the Jewish nation. Jesus Christ was to form a new 'assembly' or Church of those who accepted and followed him, a new Israel. Evidently a visible organization was envisaged by the speaker, an organization depending for its solidity and permanence on—Simon Peter. If not actually implied, it was to be deduced that Peter's office was to be perpetuated like the Church itself, for Jesus went on to say that this would be permanent: 'The gates of Hades [Sheol, the abode of the dead] will never prevail against it,' for the very reason that it was built on a rock. Some commentators, however, interpret 'the gates of hell' as all forces of evil which threaten the Church.



### *Jesus in His Own Words*

Some confusion has arisen in translations of the Gospel, because the single Aramaic word *kepha*, by which Our Lord designated both the man Simon and the rock-foundation of the Church, is translated in Greek by two words, *petros* for the man, and *petra* for the rock-foundation. This was because *petra* is a feminine word and the Greek required a masculine form for the name of a man. But while *petra* means rock, *petros* literally means 'stone'. Jesus, however, did not use the word 'stone'; he spoke only of 'rock', the bed-rock support of a solid structure (cf. Chap. 3: Conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount) and the man who was to fill that rôle in regard to the Church.

Peter was also promised 'the keys of the kingdom' and the power of binding and loosing. 'The keys of the kingdom' were the symbol of supreme authority in the Church—under Christ, whose representative on earth Peter was to be. It will be noticed that Jesus expressly identified 'his Church' with the Messianic 'kingdom of God', which he had been preaching. 'Binding and loosing' were terms used by the scribes: what was prohibited was said to be 'bound'; what was ruled to be lawful was said to be 'loosed'. In both cases an obligation in conscience was implied.

Thus, in reward for Peter's confession of faith, Jesus promised to confer on him, and those who should succeed him, the office of supreme and universal teacher and ruler in the Church, as Christ's representative. It was to the man himself, Peter, that the promise was given, to the Peter who had boldly confessed the true faith, and it is principally in regard to faith and the safeguarding of revealed truth that he will be the rock of the Church and holder of the keys. In the words of St. Leo the Great, 'Daily throughout the universal Church, Peter declares, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God"; and every tongue which acknowledges the Lord

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is part of a chorus led and directed by Peter (*magisterio hujus vocis imbuitor*).’

*First Prediction of the Passion (M. 16; Mk. 8; L. 9)*

All three evangelists record that Jesus imposed silence on the disciples regarding his being the Messiah—he did this ‘earnestly’, says Luke—and that he then for the first time ‘began to disclose’ what lay before him:

The Son of Man must needs suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and the high priests and the scribes, and be put to death, and on the third day rise again.

It was appropriate that this prediction should follow on Peter’s profession of faith, for it supplied the necessary complement to what Peter had declared. The Messiah-Son of God was to achieve his purpose by offering his life in atonement for the sins of mankind. But this was something for which even the Twelve were quite unprepared, and Peter, again taking the lead, remonstrated vigorously with Jesus: ‘God forbid, Lord! Never shall this befall thee’. In thus clumsily trying to reassure his Master, Peter was unconsciously playing the part which Satan had played in the Temptation, i.e. deterring Jesus from carrying out his mission, and so Jesus replied,

Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art a scandal [a rock of offence] to me, for thou heedest not the things of God, but the things of men.

The fact that Jesus made this further play on the name ‘Peter’ discounts to some extent from the apparent severity of the rebuke, but at the same time Jesus always swiftly reacted against anything that touched his mission. He then said to all the disciples,



### *Jesus in His Own Words*

If anyone will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross (daily—L.), and follow me. For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; and whosoever would lose his life for my sake (and for the gospel—Mk.) shall find it. For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his soul (ruin or lose his own self—L.)? Or what shall a man give as a price for his soul? For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words amid this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man too shall be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels (in his glory and that of the Father and of the holy angels—L.). For the Son of Man is about to come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then shall he render to each according to his work. Amen, I say to you (Yea, I tell you truly—L.), there are some of those standing here who shall not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom—M. (until they see the kingdom of God present in power—Mk.; until they see the kingdom of God—L.).

Not only was Jesus 'to suffer' and 'be put to death', but his disciples too had to be prepared to follow him in the way of martyrdom. In general, he who gives himself to Christ must be ready to sacrifice all for him. Metaphorically the follower of Christ 'takes up his cross' whenever he suffers gladly for his faith, and this he may have to do 'daily'. The sight of a condemned man 'carrying his cross' to execution or hanging on a cross was only too familiar to Jesus' contemporaries. Matthew's last sentence may be interpreted as a prediction of the fall of Jerusalem, but the parallel passages of Mark and Luke suggest that it was not the second coming of the Son that Jesus spoke of but the coming of the kingdom. Dr. Sanday writes: 'What is meant by the kingdom here? Is it not a very natural interpretation to explain it of that great intervention of the Spirit of God in the world, that great influx of Divine powers and energies which dates

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from Pentecost? In other words, is it not natural to equate it with the promise of the Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel, where it is implied that the coming of the Paraclete is equivalent to the coming of Christ Himself?’

*A.D. 29. August. The Transfiguration (M. 17; Mk. 9; L. 9)*

A week later, Jesus took Peter, James and John with him, and went up a mountain-side, and there he stood apart in prayer, while the three disciples slept. Suddenly waking, however, the disciples saw Jesus completely transfigured and talking to two men. Jesus’ face seemed to have changed and shone like the sun, while his garments had become of a dazzling whiteness, ‘whiter far than fuller on earth could make them.’ In the majestic figures with Our Lord, they recognized Moses and Elias, and the three were speaking of Jesus’ approaching death at Jerusalem. Moses and Elias, typifying respectively the Law and the Prophets, together represented all that was most sacred in Israel’s past. And they spoke with Jesus of his coming sacrifice; this was the meeting of the two dispensations, that of the Old Covenant and that of the New. The irrepressible Peter began offering to make shelters for the visitors, but even as he spoke, a luminous cloud descended and covered the three figures, while from the cloud a voice was heard saying, ‘This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.’ All Jews knew that of old God used to appear as or in a luminous cloud; it had a special name, the Shekina. So the disciples were terrified by this apparition and fell on their faces. But Jesus came and touched them, saying,

Arise, and fear not.

Then looking up, they saw Jesus, no longer transfigured and alone.



### *Jesus in His Own Words*

The Father's voice from heaven had been heard at the beginning of Jesus' public life and now it was heard again, most appropriately, at its turning-point. For the Jewish leaders having rejected Jesus' mission, it had become certain that they would eventually put him to death. Nevertheless Jesus' chosen Twelve believed in him, although as yet with but little understanding of God's purposes. The vision and Divine testimony will have served to confirm the disciples' faith and fortify them for the shocks it would have to bear when the tragedy of which Jesus had warned them was accomplished. It was also an authoritative confirmation of Jesus' Sonship, to which Peter had recently borne witness. More than thirty years later, in his second Epistle, Peter was to recall how he had been an eye-witness of Jesus' transfiguration, when 'he received honour and glory from God the Father, and these words came forth to him from the majestic glory, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And this word we heard coming forth from heaven, when we were together with him on the holy mountain.' It will be noticed that St. Peter says that the Father's testimony was addressed to Jesus himself.

As the four went down the mountain-side, Jesus said to his companions,

Tell not the vision to anyone, until the Son of Man be risen from the dead.

Among themselves they discussed what this 'rising from the dead' could mean. But what more immediately puzzled them was that Elias, whom they had just seen in the vision on the mountain, should have disappeared again without doing anything. So they asked Jesus why it was said that Elias must come again before the appearance of the Messiah. Jesus replied,

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Elias is indeed to come first and restore all things ; and how then is it written of the Son of Man that he is to suffer many things and to be set at naught? But I tell you, Elias hath already come, and they have not recognized him, but have done to him all they would, as it is written of him. Even so is the Son of Man also about to suffer at their hands.

The sequence of ideas in this passage seems to be: 'True, it has been foretold that Elias will come first and restore all things, but then the Scripture also says that the Son of Man who comes after him will have to suffer. How are these to be reconciled? The truth is that the prophecy regarding Elias is not to be interpreted literally. In fact, Elias has come already, and, far from restoring things, he has been ignored and has fallen victim to human injustice, as did the first Elias. And you must not be surprised if the Son of Man himself suffers a like fate.' Then the disciples understood that it was John the Baptist whom Jesus had in mind. Both Elias and John were the victims of a wicked woman and a weak ruler.

*A.D. 29. August. Cure of Possessed Epileptic (M. 17 ; Mk. 9 ; L. 9)*

When they rejoined the other disciples on the following day, they found them in difficulties. A man had brought his son, an epileptic from infancy and possessed by a dumb devil, to be cured. In the absence of Jesus, the disciples had tried to exorcise the devil, but the boy remained as before. A crowd had been watching their efforts and their ill-success had led to arguments with some scribes who were present. On seeing Jesus, the crowd ran to greet him, and he asked,

What is it that ye dispute with them [with my disciples]?

The father of the boy then threw himself on his knees before him and related what had passed. Jesus said,



*Jesus in His Own Words*

O unbelieving and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him hither to me.

The boy was brought, and then and there had one of his fits. Jesus asked the father,

From what time hath this befallen him?

And the father replied, 'From childhood. . . . If thou canst do aught, take pity on us and help us.' Jesus took him up rather sternly,

If thou canst! All things are possible to him that believeth.

The father then made the immortal reply, 'I do believe; help thou my unbelief.' But probably he was asking not for an increase of faith, but for a miracle in spite of what he recognized as his insufficient faith. And Jesus granted his prayer, curing the boy of his epilepsy and saying to the deaf and dumb spirit,

Thou deaf and dumb spirit, I command thee, go out of him, and never more enter him.

When they were alone together later, the disciples asked Jesus why it was they had not been able to exorcise this devil. Jesus told them,

Because of your little faith. Amen, I say to you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say to this mountain, Remove hence thither [from this place to that], and it shall remove; and naught shall be impossible to you. But this kind is not cast out save by prayer and fasting—M. (This kind can be cast out by naught save prayer—Mk.)

The words 'and fasting' are not in the Vatican and Sinaitic codices, which scholars consider the best. While the on-

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lookers were marvelling at the miracle, Jesus said to the Twelve,

Lay ye up these words in your ears: the Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men.

*Talks with Disciples (M. 17 and 18; Mk. 9; L. 9)*

It would seem that 'the mountain' of the Transfiguration was in the neighbourhood of Caesarea Philippi, because we are told that 'on their departure thence they passed through Galilee,' making for Capharnaum. Jesus still wished to remain incognito, probably in order to continue his talks with the disciples, but perhaps also to avoid the attentions of Herod the Tetrarch. In the forefront of Jesus' mind now was the prophecy of Isaiah about the 'Suffering Servant of God,' which it was his mission to fulfil, and he endeavoured to accustom his disciples to this idea, so foreign to their expectations and hopes: He was teaching his disciples and saying to them,

The Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they shall put him to death, and three days after being put to death he shall rise again.

But these warnings only troubled and confused them; they could make no sense of them and were afraid to ask what Jesus meant. For them the coming of the kingdom still meant a worldly triumph, and as they talked together along the road, they began discussing what positions they themselves would hold in the kingdom, and which of them would be the greater. When they reached Capharnaum and were together indoors, Jesus asked them,

What were ye debating on the way?



### *Jesus in His Own Words*

None of them cared to say, but Jesus did not need to be told. He immediately went on,

If any man would be first, he should be last of all and minister [servant] of all.

There was a child there, and Jesus called him and set him by his side, putting his arm round him, and said,

Amen I say to you, unless ye turn again [reverse your present line of conduct] and become like little children ye shall not enter the kingdom of the heavens. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of the heavens (M.).

Jesus set the child before the disciples as an example of humility. In what consists the humility of a child? In its ingenuous recognition of its dependence, especially on its parents. Humility is based on truth. It should not lead us to deny the talents or graces God has given us, but always to recognize our dependence upon God for these and everything else we have and are. In that respect man should always remain in regard to God what a child is towards his father. According to Mark and Luke, Jesus said,

Whosoever receiveth one such little child in my name, receiveth me. And whosoever receiveth me, receiveth not me but him who sent me. (Yea, he that is the least among you all, he is great—L.).

Lagrange thinks that Jesus was referring to the more simple believers, little ones in the Faith. Taking up the phrase 'in my name,' John said, 'Master, we saw a man casting out devils in thy name, and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us.' Jesus replied,

Forbid him not; for there is no man that shall work a

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miracle in my name and shall be able soon to speak ill of me, for he that is not against us is for us. Yea, whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink because ye are Christ's, amen I say to you, he shall not lose his reward. And whosoever shall scandalize [lead astray] one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea (drowned in the depth of the sea—M.). Take heed to yourselves. See that ye despise not one of these little ones, for I say to you, their angels in the heavens always behold the face of my Father who is in the heavens. For the Son of Man hath come to save that which was lost.

The last sentence is omitted here by the Vatican and Sinaitic codices (cf. Chap. 8: Zacchaeus the Publican). A parallel passage in Matthew (10) runs:

He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him who sent me. He that receiveth a prophet because he is a prophet, shall receive the reward of a prophet; and he that receiveth a just man because he is a just man, shall receive the reward of a just man. And whosoever shall give one of these little ones but a cup of cold water to drink because he is a disciple, amen I say to you, he shall not lose his reward.

Children are not to be despised, because they are so dear to God that he has entrusted them to the care of the angels who form his court. But Jesus was also thinking of all 'little ones in the Faith,' and indeed all God's children, for he continued,

*Parable of the Lost Sheep (M. 18)*

What think ye? If a man have a hundred sheep and one of them stray, will he not leave the ninety-nine upon the mountains and go in search of the one gone astray? And if it befall that he find it, amen I say to you, he rejoiceth over it



more than over the ninety-nine that went not astray. Even so, it is not the will of your Father in the heavens that one of these little ones perish.

According to Luke, Jesus uttered the same parable in a different context (cf. Chap. 7: Parable of the Lost Sheep). Here the lesson taught is that expressed in the last sentence: God does not wish a single soul to be lost. It is therefore the duty of Jesus and his disciples to find the lost sheep and bring them back to the flock. The eternal value of each individual is a cardinal point of Christian teaching. We may also deduce from the parable that God does not fail to offer the sinner adequate grace for repentance.

*Duty of Avoiding Occasions of Sin (M. 18; Mk. 9)*

Woe to the world because of scandals! For it must needs be that scandals come; yet woe to that man through whom the scandal cometh! If thy hand scandalize thee cut it off (and cast it from thee—M.); it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than with two hands to depart into hell [Gehenna], into the unquenchable fire (everlasting fire—M.).

And if thy foot scandalize thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into life lame, than with two feet to be cast into hell.

And if thine eye scandalize thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee; it is better for thee to enter into life one-eyed, than with two eyes to be cast into the hell [Gehenna] of fire, 'where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched' [quotation from Isaiah].

A 'scandal' is something that puts one off from following the truth, doing what is right. In the passage of Isaiah from which Jesus quotes, the prophet pictures God's enemies cast out of Jerusalem into the adjoining valley of Hinnom (Hebrew

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*Gehinnom*, hence *Gehenna*) and left there unburied, a prey to unending corruption and fire. According to Mark, Jesus concluded,

For with fire shall every man be salted. Salt is good; but if salt lose its saltness, wherewith shall ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace one with another.

Both salt and fire are means of purifying, preserving from corruption (cf. Chap. 3: The Christian Ideal). They correspond here to the spirit of self-sacrifice which Jesus has just been inculcating. John the Baptist had spoken of two fires (cf. Chap. 2: The Forerunner).

*On Correction and Forgiveness (M. 18; L. 17)*

In Matthew, Jesus, after speaking of God's desire that not a single soul should perish, continued,

But if thy brother sin, go, show him his fault, between thee and him alone. If he listen to thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he listen not, take with thee one or two others, that 'in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word be established!' (Deut. 19, 15). And if he will not hear them, tell the church. But if he will not hear even the church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican. Amen I say to you, whatsoever ye shall bind upon earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose upon earth shall be loosed in heaven. Amen again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything for which they ask, it shall be done for them by my Father in the heavens. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A Saying in the Oxyrhynchus papyri:

Wheresoever there are [two, they are not without] God: and where there is one alone I say I am with him. Lift up the stone and there shalt thou find me: cleave the wood, and I am there.



Matthew is the only evangelist to use the word 'Church', and he uses it twice, here and in Jesus' words to Peter at Caesarea Philippi. Excommunication was known to the Jews; it could only be pronounced by the competent authority. Jesus implied that something similar would be necessary in the New Israel. He used the current Jewish expression to describe its effect: 'as the heathen and the publican.' The Twelve, to whom he was speaking, would hold a position of authority in the New Israel, and Jesus invested them, as he had already invested Peter, with the power of binding and loosing (cf. Chap. 5: Peter's Profession of Faith). Jesus' next saying evidently had a wider application and may have been addressed to a larger gathering; Matthew frequently groups together sayings which were actually uttered on different occasions. At the Last Supper Jesus was to explain his continual presence by the mission of the Holy Spirit. It was the Spirit who would ensure that Jesus' followers were all of one mind about what they asked in his name.

Peter then put the question, 'Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?' Jesus replied,

Nay, I say to thee, not up to seven times but up to seventy times seven (M.).<sup>1</sup>

In Luke, Peter's question is omitted, and it is Jesus who says,

If thy brother sin, rebuke him; and if he repent forgive him. And if he should sin against thee seven times in the day and seven times return to thee, saying 'I repent,' thou shalt forgive him.

<sup>1</sup> In the Gospel according to the Hebrews, Jesus adds here:

For in the prophets also, after they were anointed by the Holy Spirit, the word of sin [i.e. somewhat of sin] was found.

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*Parable of Unforgiving Servant (M. 18)*

Therefore is the kingdom of the heavens like to a king who wished to make up his accounts with his servants. And when he began to make them up, there was brought to him one who owed ten thousand talents; and whereas he had not wherewith to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold with his wife and his children and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore falling down prostrated himself before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.' And the lord of that servant was moved with compassion and released him and forgave him the debt. But upon going out, that servant found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he seized and throttled him, saying, 'Pay what thou owest'. His fellow-servant therefore fell down and besought him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay thee'. But he would not, but went and cast him into prison until he should pay what was owing. His fellow-servants, therefore, seeing what had befallen, were deeply grieved; and they went and explained to their lord all that had befallen. Then his lord sent for him and saith to him, 'Thou wicked servant, all that debt I forgave thee because thou besoughtest me; shouldst not thou also have had pity on thy fellow-servant, even as myself had pity on thee?' And his lord, being angry, delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was owing. So also shall my heavenly Father do to you, if ye forgive not each his brother from your hearts.

Jesus repeatedly taught that we must treat others as our heavenly Father treats us, or as we want him to treat us. Here the lesson was that, as we have so much reason to ask God's forgiveness, we must never tire of sincerely forgiving our penitent brethren. If we are unforgiving, we cannot look for God's forgiveness. Our forgiveness must be 'from the heart.'



*Paying the Temple Tax (M. 17)*

As soon as Jesus and the disciples had returned to Capernaum, the collectors of the annual Temple tax—two drachmas for every male of twenty or upwards—enquired of Peter, ‘Does not your master pay the drachmas?’ Peter replied that he did, which was no doubt the case. But when he returned home, Jesus himself raised the subject, saying to him,

What thinkest thou, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth collect taxes or tribute: from their sons or from others?

‘From others’, replied Peter, and Jesus retorted,

The sons then are exempt.

Peter had but recently declared Jesus to be ‘the Son of the living God’, and Jesus took this opportunity to give him a little lesson on the implications of that title. The tax-collectors, however, could not be expected to recognize the exemption, and Jesus had no wish to scandalize them. Nevertheless, he chose to assert his Divine power by the manner of providing the sum demanded. So he said to Peter,

But that we may not scandalize them, go to the Sea and cast in a hook, and take up the first fish to rise; upon opening its mouth thou shalt find a stater [equal to four drachmas]. Take and give it to them for me and for thee.

H. V. Morton mentions that the characteristic fish of the Sea of Galilee, the *mush*t or comb-fish, has a disproportionately big head, and that its mouth will easily hold a large coin. Besides the purpose already mentioned, this miracle illustrates the actual poverty practised by Jesus, his readiness to comply with the law, even when strictly speaking he was not

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bound by it, and the special position in which Peter stood in regard to himself.

*Close of Galilean Ministry (J. 7; M. 11; L. 9)*

The feast of Tabernacles (Tents or Booths) was held at Jerusalem in October and lasted eight days; it commemorated the Israelites' sojourn in the desert after their departure from Egypt. The unbelieving 'brethren' of Jesus suggested that it would be good publicity for him to go up with a pilgrim party on this occasion and perform some of his miracles at Jerusalem. Jesus said to them,

My time is not yet come; but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you; but it hateth me, because I bear witness concerning it that its works are evil. Do ye go up to the feast; I do not yet go up to this feast; for my time is not yet fulfilled.

So he let the pilgrims go without him, but afterwards he went up with his disciples 'in secret'. It would seem that Jesus now left Galilee for ever, although the Gospels are not clear on this point. At any rate, before leaving the Lakeside, the principal scene of his ministry, Jesus commented bitterly on the poor results of that ministry:

Woe to thee, Chorazin! Woe to thee, Bethsaida! For if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the miracles which have been wrought in you, long ago they would have repented in sackcloth and ashes. Nay, I tell you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. And thou, Capharnaum, shalt thou be exalted unto heaven? Down unto hell shalt thou go! (Isaiah, 14, 14). For if in Sodom had been wrought the miracles which have been wrought in thee, it would have remained to this day. Nay, I tell you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee.



### *Jesus in His Own Words*

It is probably of this journey to Jerusalem that Luke says that Jesus sent messengers ahead to prepare for the party. That the precaution was not superfluous was soon evident, for a Samaritan village refused to receive them, as they were going to Jerusalem. James and John, the 'sons of thunder', asked Jesus if they should not call down fire from heaven on the inhospitable place. Jesus, however, rebuked them. The primitive text of the third Gospel said no more than this, but certain MSS. added the words which appear in the Vulgate:

Ye know not of what spirit ye are. The Son of Man came not to destroy men's souls [lives] but to save them.

It was on this journey, says Luke, that a man said to Jesus, 'I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest' and that Jesus replied,

The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head.

Matthew, who puts the incident earlier, says the man was a scribe. Matthew (8) also tells of one of the disciples who said to Jesus, 'Permit me first to go and bury my father.' If, as it seems from Luke, the incident was connected with this journey, the disciple may have wanted the journey postponed. Jesus replied,

Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their dead. (Do thou go and proclaim the kingdom of God—L.)

Luke tells of yet another who said, 'I will follow thee, Lord, but first permit me to take my leave of those at home.' Jesus said to him,

No one that hath put his hand to the plough and looketh back is fit for the kingdom of God.

These sayings illustrate the detachment from family and

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personal interests which Jesus demanded of his disciples, especially of those who were to be the future preachers of the gospel (cf. Chap. 4: Jesus' True Kindred, and Chap. 7: Detachment demanded of Jesus' Disciples and The Rich Young Man).



## CHAPTER 6

### TWO VISITS TO JERUSALEM

*A.D. 29. October. Tabernacles. Jesus on his Mission (J. 7)*

IT WAS NOT until the middle of the feast, i.e. on the fourth or fifth day, that Jesus made his first appearance in the Temple and began teaching. Some of his hearers expressed astonishment at such learning in one who had not received the regular training of a rabbi. Jesus replied,

My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me. If anyone willeth to do his will, he shall know of my teaching whether it cometh from God or whether I speak from myself. He that speaketh from himself seeketh his own glory; but he that seeketh the glory of him who sent him, he is true, and unjustness is not in him. Did not Moses give you the Law? And none of you keepeth the Law. Why seek ye to put me to death? One work I did [cf. Chap. 5: Cure of Sick Man at the Pool], and ye all wonder. For this cause Moses hath given you circumcision—not that it is from Moses but from the fathers [the Patriarchs]—and on a sabbath ye circumcise a man. If a man receiveth circumcision on the sabbath lest the Law of Moses be broken, are ye angry with me because I made a whole man sound on the sabbath? Judge not according to appearances, but judge the just judgment.

It was Jesus' constant contention that any one who sincerely loved God, and was bent on doing his will, would recognize the Divine truth in his (Jesus') words and the Divine power in his works. Such a one would not need to be told who Jesus was; he would see for himself that he was worthy of trust and would have faith in him. But the Jews lacked these dis-

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positions; they did not even keep the Law of Moses as God intended it to be kept. And because Jesus followed God's ideas about the Sabbath instead of theirs, they sought to kill him.

Some of his hearers, dwellers in Jerusalem, were so far impressed by what Jesus said as to wonder whether after all he might not be the Messiah. 'Yet,' they argued, 'we know whence this man is, but when the Christ cometh, no one is to know whence he is.' Jesus declared with emphasis that it was not his human origin that it was important to ascertain, but the divine origin of his mission:

Ye both know me and know whence I am; and I am not come of myself, but he who hath sent me is true [truly a sender, a sender worthy of the name], whom ye know not. I know him; because I am from him, and he hath sent me.

The Jews realized that Jesus was speaking of God, and his enemies would gladly have arrested him, while others said, 'When the Messiah cometh, will he do more signs than this man hath done?' Hearing of what was being said, the chief priests actually gave order for his arrest, but the presence of the crowd prevented it from being carried out. 'His hour was not yet come,' says the evangelist. Jesus went on teaching, but he warned his hearers:

Yet a little while am I with you; and I go to him who sent me. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me; and where I am, ye cannot come.

One of the daily ceremonies of the feast was to carry water from the fountain of Siloam and pour it on the altar. On the last day, Jesus stood forth and cried aloud,

If any man thirst, let him come to me, and let him drink. Whoso believeth in me, as the Scripture saith, 'Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.'



### *Jesus in His Own Words*

'This,' says the evangelist, 'he said of the Spirit which they were to receive who believed in him.' The saying also recalls Jesus' words to the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well (Chap. 2). There was great dissension about Jesus among the people, and also in the Sanhedrin, where Nicodemus took his part, urging that no man should be declared guilty without a fair trial.

#### *The Adulteress (J. 8)*

Jesus used to spend the night outside the city, either with friends at Bethany or on the Mount of Olives, and return to the Temple in the morning. Here in the fourth Gospel, as we have it, occurs a passage which is strikingly different in style from the rest of that Gospel and is recognized as an insertion—although part of Holy Scripture. It relates the episode of the woman taken in adultery, whom scribes and Pharisees brought to Jesus with the words: 'Moses prescribed that such persons should be stoned to death. What do you say?' This was probably a snare they were setting for Jesus: If he ordered stoning, he would be defying the Roman authority which reserved to itself the power to inflict capital punishment; if he did not, he would be in conflict with the Mosaic Law, as then interpreted. It was a dilemma similar to that involved in their question about the tribute (cf. Chap. 8), and there is a similarity too in the replies by which Jesus evaded both traps. At first, he ignored them, bending down and writing with his finger on the ground—'doodling', as we say. But when they pressed for an answer, he sat up and said,

Let him that is without sin among you throw the first stone at her.

Having so said, he stooped down and again wrote on the

## *Two Visits to Jerusalem*

ground. And one by one, the woman's accusers slipped away, until only she was left. Then Jesus raised his head and looked around, asking,

Woman, where are they? Hath no one condemned thee?

She answered, 'No one, Lord.' And Jesus said,

Neither do I condemn thee; go, henceforth sin no more.

It was no part of Jesus' mission to administer ordinary justice. His concern was with the souls of men, the souls of accused and judges alike. As in the previous case of a 'sinful woman' (cf. Chap. 4), Jesus here showed his penetrating knowledge not only of the woman but of her accusers. That the latter were not moved by zeal for Divine justice was proved by their own lives, and, perhaps fearing further exposure, they hastily departed. The terrified woman was left alone with Jesus. She probably knew little or nothing about him and his gospel, for Jesus did not speak to her of faith or forgiveness. But, as Isaiah had said of him in prophecy, 'Bruised reed he shall not break, and smoking flax [used as lamp-wick] he shall not quench' (M. 12). He calmed her fears: 'Neither do I condemn thee [to be stoned to death]', and bid her take warning from what had happened: 'Henceforth sin no more'. Jesus did not wish to abolish human law or the punishment of crime, but he was clearly averse to cruelty disguised as justice, and he taught that those who administer justice should never forget that no human being is worthy in himself of administering Divine justice.

*'The Light of the World' (J. 8)*

During the feast of Tabernacles candelabra were lighted in the Temple courts, and these may have been the occasion of Jesus' saying, uttered there:



### *Jesus in His Own Words*

I am the light of the world. He that followeth me shall not walk at all in the darkness, but shall have the light of life.

In the prologue to his Gospel, the same evangelist says of the eternal Word of God, 'In him was life, and the life was the light of men. . . . It was the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world.' And in that very place, Jesus as an infant had been hailed by the aged Simeon as 'a light of revelation unto the gentiles.' Some Pharisees now reminded Jesus that he had said, 'If I bear witness concerning myself, my witness is not true' (cf. Chap. 5: The Son of God), and they argued, 'Now thou bearest witness concerning thyself.' Jesus replied,

Even if I witness about myself, my witness is true, because I know whence I came and whither I go; but ye know not whence I have come or whither I go.

Whatever the legal value of Jesus' witness to himself, it was in fact true, because uttered by one who possessed complete knowledge about himself, whereas the Pharisees who condemned him lacked that knowledge.

Ye judge according to the flesh; I do not judge anyone. And yet if I do judge, my judgment is true, because I am not alone, but he who sent me is with me. And in your Law it is written, that the witness of two men is true. I witness about myself, and the Father who sent me witnesseth about me.

Judgment 'according to the flesh' means natural, human standards of judging. 'Where is thy Father?' they asked. Jesus replied,

Neither me do ye know, nor my Father; if ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also.

'These words he spoke in the treasury . . . and no one appre-

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hended him because his hour was not yet come.' Jesus again warned his hearers that they should waste no time in making up their minds about him:

I go away, and ye shall seek me, and ye shall die in your sin. Whither I go, ye cannot come.

They wondered what this could mean, but Jesus went on,

Ye are from beneath, I am from above; ye are of this world, I am not of this world. Therefore I said to you that ye shall die in your sins; for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.

To be saved from one's sins it was necessary to believe in Jesus as the Saviour, the Messiah. But, as usual, Jesus would not expressly call himself the Messiah. The phrase 'I am he' will be explained at the end of this discourse. The Jews then asked, 'Who art thou?' The text of Jesus' reply is obscure:

Even that which I have told you from the beginning [or perhaps, How is it that I even speak to you at all?]. I have many things to say and to judge about you; but he who sent me is true, and the things I have heard from him, these I speak in the world.

The alternative version of the first sentence would express indignation, and even a kind of despair, at the persistent blindness of the Jews. Fr. Condamin (*Revue Biblique*, 1899) gives a different interpretation of the above passage: 'You ask me who I am. First of all, what do you mean? Do you ask what is the source of my teaching? That is what you should ask first, for it is my words that bear testimony of me. My teaching is from my Father, and proves my divine mission.' The rest of the discourse is a development of this idea.

When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then ye shall know that I am he, and that of myself I do nothing, but that as the



### *Jesus in His Own Words*

Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And he who sent me is with me; he hath not left me alone, because the things that please him I do always.

Many of those who heard him now believed, and Jesus said to them,

If ye abide in my word, ye are truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

Some objected, 'We are the seed of Abraham, and we have never been slaves to any one. How sayest thou, "Ye shall be free"?' Jesus replied,

Amen, amen, I say to you, Every one that committeth sin is a slave of sin. Now the slave abideth not in the house for ever; the Son abideth for ever. If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. I know that ye are the seed of Abraham; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. I speak that which I have seen by the Father; and ye therefore do the things that ye have heard from your father.

In other words, the Jews, in planning to kill Jesus, were showing themselves to be children not of God but of the devil. They said, 'Our father is Abraham.' Jesus said,

If ye are the children of Abraham, do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man who hath told you the truth which I have heard from God. This Abraham did not. Ye do the works of your father.

They said, 'We were not born of fornication; we have one Father, God'. The Jews spoke of idolatry as spiritual fornication. Here they protested that they and their fathers had always been faithful to the true God. Jesus replied,

If God were your Father, ye would love me, for from God I went forth and am come; for I am not come of myself,

## *Two Visits to Jerusalem*

but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? Because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father, the devil, and the desires of your father ye would do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and stood not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar and the father of lies. But because I speak the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you doth convict me of sin? If I speak the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth the words of God. For this cause ye hear not, because ye are not of God.

The Jews became abusive: 'Do we not say well that thou art a Samaritan and hast a devil?' Jesus calmly replied,

I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye dishonour me. I seek not mine own glory; there is one who seeketh it and who judgeth. Amen, amen, I say to you, if any one keep my word, he shall never see death.

'Now we know that thou hast a devil,' cried the Jews. 'Abraham died and the prophets. . . . Art thou greater than Abraham. . . . Whom dost thou make thyself?' Jesus replied,

If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifieth me, of whom ye say that he is your God. Ye know him not, but I know him; and if I were to say that I know him not, I should be like unto you, a liar. But I know him and keep his word. Abraham your father exulted that he was to see my day; and he saw it, and rejoiced.

'Thou art not yet fifty,' said the Jews, 'and hast thou seen Abraham?' Jesus said,

Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham came to be, I am.

In the fourth Gospel, Jesus uses the expression which the Greek renders 'I am' (without complement) six times.



### *Jesus in His Own Words*

Usually the sense required by the context is 'I am he' or 'It is I'. Here are the other five occasions: (1) at the close of his conversation with the Samaritan woman, 'I that speak with you *am he* (i.e. the Messiah); (2) when walking on the waters of the Lake, '*It is I*, do not be afraid'; (3 and 4) in the present discourse, 'If you believe not that *I am he*,' and 'You shall know that *I am he*,' and (5) at the Last Supper, 'that you may believe . . . that *I am he*.' Fr. Lagrange notes that the Greek *ego eimi* (I am) is that used to translate the two Hebrew words *Ani Hu* (that is, 'I he') by which God refers to himself in Deuteronomy 32, 39, 'See ye that *I alone am*, and there is no other God beside me,' and in Isaiah 43, 10, 'that you may understand that *I myself am*.' Then too there was God's answer to Moses, when he asked his name, '*I am who am*. Thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel, *He who is* (lit. 'I am') hath sent me to you' (Exod. 3, 14). Hence to the Jews the ineffable Name of God was '*He who is*' (Yahweh or Jehovah). In saying, therefore, 'Before Abraham came to be, I am,' Jesus was both affirming his pre-existence and doing so in terms which implied Divinity. Whether or not the full significance of the words was grasped by his hearers, they judged him guilty of blasphemy, for they took up stones to throw at him, stoning being the penalty prescribed for blasphemy in the Mosaic Law (Lev. 24, 16). But Jesus' hour was not yet come, and he passed out unharmed.

#### *Cure of Man Born Blind (J. 9)*

The date of this miracle is not mentioned. Some scholars associate it with the feast of Tabernacles, others with the Feast of Dedication, but the point is not important since these four chapters of St. John (7-10), and the discourses they contain form a connected series. Jesus and his disciples were walking in Jerusalem on the Sabbath when they passed

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a well-known mendicant, a man who had been born blind. His disciples asked Jesus, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?' It was a characteristic Jewish belief that success was a mark of God's approval and the reverse a mark of his disapproval. Jesus replied,

Neither did this man sin, nor his parents; but the works of God were to be made manifest in him. We must work the works of him who sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am light to the world.

Having so said, Jesus spat on the ground and made clay with the spittle, and smeared the clay over the man's eyes. Then he said to him,

Go, wash in the pool of Siloam.

The man did so, and was able to see. The cure of one so well known in Jerusalem was soon remarked on, and the man was submitted to a vexatious investigation by the Pharisees, who learned from him that it was the work of Jesus and had been performed on the Sabbath. They even examined the man's parents to make sure that he had really been blind from birth. Failing to convince him that Jesus was a sinner because in curing him he had broken the Sabbath, they drove him out in anger. Jesus, having heard of this, found the man, and said to him,

Dost thou believe in the Son of Man?

'Who is he?' asked the man. Jesus replied,

Thou hast seen him; yea, and he it is who speaketh with thee.

The man said, 'I believe, Lord,' and prostrated himself in worship before Jesus, who remarked,



### *Jesus in His Own Words*

For judgment have I come into this world, that they who see not may see, and they who see may become blind.

Some Pharisees who overheard him asked, 'Are we also blind?' Jesus replied,

If ye were blind, ye would have no sin; but now ye say, 'We see'—your sin remaineth.

The 'judgment' of which Jesus spoke was not the final separation of the good and the wicked, but his presence inevitably brought about a separation, according to the attitude men took towards him. It is of this 'discernment' that the same evangelist says, 'Herein is the judgment, that whereas the light is come into the world, men loved the darkness rather than the light, for their works were evil' (cf. Chap. 2: Conversation with Nicodemus). Similarly, holy Simeon had foretold, 'This Child is set for the fall and for the rise of many in Israel.' Jesus implied that there were two kinds of spiritual blindness, that of the humble who realized their ignorance and were willing to be taught, and that of the proud, who deliberately shut their eyes to the light of truth. The former Jesus was able to cure, but the latter were incurable.

#### *The Shepherd and his Sheep (J. 10)*

In the Psalms God was spoken of as the Shepherd of Israel, his flock; both Jeremias and Ezechiel conveyed God's severe rebuke to the neglectful shepherds of Israel, and the latter foretold the coming of the Divine Shepherd himself: 'Behold I myself will seek my sheep and will visit them. . . . I will save my flock . . . and I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David (i.e. the Messiah, a descendant of David). He shall feed them and he shall be their shepherd (Chap. 34).' Jesus now uttered a

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kind of parable drawn from the sheepfold. This was an enclosure in which many flocks were housed for the night. In the morning each shepherd came to the gate and gave his call to his flock, which recognized his voice and followed him.

Amen, amen, I say to you, he that entereth not by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbeth up another way, he is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the gate-keeper openeth, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them forth. When he hath brought forth all his own, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him, because they know his voice. But a stranger they will by no means follow, but will flee from him, because they know not the voice of strangers.

His hearers 'understood not what it was that he was saying to them.' It was normal at that time for a teacher to say something which could not easily be understood, and so excite questions which would lead to a fuller exposition of his teaching (cf. Chap. 4: The Sower Sowing his Seed). Our Lord constantly used this method. On this occasion he went on:

Amen, amen, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All whosoever have come before me are thieves and robbers; but the sheep have not heard them. I am the door; by me if any man enter, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and shall find pasture. The thief cometh not but to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

Jesus' first application of the parable must have come as a surprise; he compared himself to the door of the sheepfold. Honest shepherds would enter only by the door, i.e. by Jesus, because he was the true Messiah. Not long before



there had been at least three false claimants to that title; it may have been these to whom Jesus referred as 'thieves and robbers'. But most probably he meant the Scribes and Pharisees, who figure prominently in these chapters of St. John. The true ministers of salvation would come in the spirit and with the authority of Jesus Christ. He continued,

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd layeth down his life for his sheep. He that is a hireling and not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth—and the wolf seizeth and scattereth them—because he is a hireling and hath no care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and I know mine and mine know me, even as the Father knoweth me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, that are not from this fold; them also must I bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one flock, one shepherd. For this cause doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it up again. No one taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again; such is the command I have received from my Father.

Here Jesus declared himself to be the good shepherd foretold by Ezechiél, but in turn foretold his death and resurrection, which would bring salvation not only to the Jews but to mankind at large. He also declared that the offering of his life would be a free act of his human will, and that he would rise again by his own (Divine) power. These formed part of the mission for which he had been sent.

'On the roads of Palestine, and on the hills, you see the good shepherd to-day', writes H. V. Morton. 'He comes along at the head of his flock, generally carrying over his shoulders a lamb or an injured sheep. He never drives his sheep; he always walks at their head, and as he goes, he

## *Two Visits to Jerusalem*

sometimes talks to them in a loud sing-song voice, using a kind of language of his own, made up of animal sounds. One reason why the sheep and the shepherd are on such familiar terms is that sheep are kept chiefly for wool and milk, and therefore live longer. Also the shepherd spends his life with them, day and night.'

*A.D. 29. Dec. Dedication. More about the Good Shepherd (J. 10)*

The Feast of Dedication, also called the Feast of Lights, commemorated the rededication of the Temple in 164 B.C. by Judas Machabeus after its profanation by Antioches Epiphanes (1 Mach. 4). According to his custom, Jesus walked about in the Temple courts, talking to those who approached him. Some of these said to him, 'If thou art the Christ, tell us plainly.' But as usual, when dealing with the incredulous, Jesus would not make any such declaration. They had heard his words and seen his works; if these had not convinced them, a mere assertion on his part would not do so either. He replied therefore,

I have told you, and ye believe not. The works which I do in the name of my Father, these witness concerning me; but ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give them life everlasting; and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand. What my Father hath given me is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch out of the hand of my Father. I and the Father are one.

The last sentence but one has been translated in various ways: 'My Father who has given me [my sheep] is greater than all' (Vogels); 'My Father, what he has given me [i.e. the sheep] is more precious than all' (Lagrange); 'This trust which my Father has committed to me is more precious than all else'



(Knox). The main sense is clear: no one can rob the Son of his sheep because no one can rob the Father, and Father and Son are one and the same thing. His hearers understood these words as a claim to share in the divine nature. Again there was a movement to stone him. Jesus said to them,

Many good works have I shown you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?

The Jews replied, 'For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy, and because, being a man, thou makest thyself God.' Jesus said,

Is it not written in your Law, 'I said, Ye are gods'? If he called gods them to whom the word of God was spoken, and the Scripture cannot be evaded, say ye of him whom the Father hath hallowed and sent into the world, 'Thou blasphemest', because I said, 'I am [the] son of God'? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do them, though ye believe not myself, believe the works, that ye may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.

Jesus was telling them that they should not take offence merely at a word but should see in what sense the word was used and whether such use of it was justified. For instance, Psalm 81 represents God as rebuking the judges of Israel with the words, 'Myself I have said, "Ye are gods, and all of you sons of the Most High." Nevertheless, ye shall die like mere men, and fall like any prince.' So it was not necessarily blasphemous to apply the phrase 'Son of God' to a man, as they pretended. (In the Greek text there is no definite article, which indeed spoils the argument.) But Jesus not only had a higher claim to the title, but was using it in a higher sense. The justification for such use of it was to be found in his works.

This answer failed to appease them, but Jesus escaped the

## *Two Visits to Jerusalem*

threatened violence and quitted Jerusalem and Judaea, crossing the Jordan into Peraea.

### *Chronology*

In this chapter we have followed St. John, without interrupting the sequence of discourses and other episodes which he relates in connection with the two Feasts of Tabernacles and Dedication in A.D. 29, because they form a connected series. In between the above feasts two months elapsed, but there is no certainty as to what should be assigned to this interval. After the Feast of Dedication (Dec.) Jesus passed into Peraea and seems to have remained there until the following March, when the news of Lazarus' illness brought him back to Judaea. Again, we are not expressly told what happened in Peraea, except that Jesus went first to the place where John the Baptist used to baptize and that many came to him there, and also that many, seeing his miracles, believed in him. However, Luke has a number of undated incidents and parables (Chaps. 10-18) which do not seem to have formed part of the Galilean Ministry, and may therefore have taken place either in Judaea or Peraea during these two intervals. These are given in the next chapter.



## CHAPTER 7

### IN JUDAEA AND PERAEA

#### *Second Mission of Disciples (L. 10)*

LUKE, WHO ALSO records the earlier mission of the Twelve, is the only evangelist to mention a second mission of seventy (or seventy-two—the MSS. vary as to the number) disciples, whom Jesus 'sent forth two by two before him, unto every town and place whither he was himself to come.' Since it seems likely that only Galilee could have furnished so many missionaries, this band may have preceded Our Lord on his journey southward for the Feast of Tabernacles, and it may have been arranged for them to rejoin him at Bethany or some other meeting-place. But this is only conjecture; we do not know for certain when or where these events occurred. Before they left on their mission, Jesus said to them,

The harvest is great, but the labourers are few; beg ye therefore the lord of the harvest to send forth labourers unto his harvest. Go: behold I send you forth as lambs into the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no wallet, no shoes, and salute ye no one on the way. Whatsoever house ye enter, first say, 'Peace to this house': and if a son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon him: but if not, it shall return unto you. Stay ye in that same house, eating and drinking what they provide; for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Do not remove from house to house. Whatsoever town ye enter and they receive you, eat what is set before you, and heal the sick therein, and say ye to them, 'The kingdom of God is nigh upon you'. But whatsoever town ye enter and they receive you not, go ye forth into the streets thereof and say,

*In Judaea and Peraea*

‘Even the dust that doth cleave to our feet from your town we wipe off against you; yet this know ye, that the kingdom of God is nigh’. I say to you, in that day it shall be more tolerable for Sodom than for that town. . . . He that heareth you heareth me; and he that rejecteth you rejecteth me; and he that rejecteth me, rejecteth him who sent me [cf. Chap. 4: Mission of the Twelve].

*Return of the Disciples (L. 10; M. 11 and 13)*

This mission proved successful: the disciples returned ‘in joy’, saying gleefully, ‘Lord, even the devils are subject to us in thy name.’ Jesus himself spoke of the mission as a signal defeat for Satan, but at the same time indicated a higher motive for their joy,

I beheld Satan fall like a lightning-flash from heaven. Behold, I have given you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the might of the enemy, and naught shall in any way harm you. Nevertheless rejoice not at this, that the spirits are subject to you; but rejoice that your names are written in the heavens.

It was then, says Luke, that Jesus ‘exulted in the Holy Spirit’ and said,

I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes: yea, Father, because so it hath been well pleasing in thine eyes. All things have been delivered to me by my Father: and no one knoweth who the Son is, except the Father; and who the Father is, except the Son, and he to whom the Son may choose to reveal him.

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and humble of heart, and ye shall find rest for your souls; for my yoke is sweet, and my burden light.



### *Jesus in His Own Words*

This is the only occasion on which Jesus is shown experiencing intense spiritual joy and consolation, 'exulting in the Holy Spirit'. And the cause of his joy was the unfolding of God's plan by which the simple unsophisticated folk responded to the message of God, which the worldly-wise had rejected. As St. Paul was to write to the Corinthians, 'The foolish things of the world God hath chosen, so as to put to shame the men of "wisdom", and the weak things of the world God hath chosen, so as to put to shame the strong things, and the base things of the world, aye, the things that are despised, the things that are not, God hath chosen, so as to bring to naught the things that are, lest any flesh should vaunt itself in the face of God' (1 Cor. 1, 27).

Jesus then made a declaration of his relationship to, and unique knowledge of, the Father, which is especially valuable as being recorded by Matthew and Luke. For its resemblance to the Jerusalem discourses recorded by John is obvious, and so we have here a proof that the doctrine of the Synoptics and the fourth Gospel, in spite of differences of style, is identically the same. That doctrine is the Divinity of Jesus Christ, which is here clearly implied. As St. John says in his prologue, 'God no man hath seen at any time; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.'

In the appeal, 'Come unto me . . .' etc., the contrast is between the spirit of the Gospel and the spirit of Pharisaic observance of the Law. Unlike the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus is a 'meek and humble' teacher, who does not impose on his disciples any burden that they are unable to carry. He invites those who are weary of labouring under the yoke of the Law to accept his teaching which will give rest to their souls. At the same time, says Fr. Lagrange, Jesus, in these words, 'reveals the secret of his Heart.' Socially, his condi-

*In Judaea and Peraea*

tion is humble, but he prefers it so: he is 'meek and humble of heart'—in contrast with the proud and lofty who despise him—and meekness and humility are all his teaching: meekness towards one's fellow-men and humility towards God. The result is peace of soul, with God, with one's neighbour and with oneself. Finally, Jesus said to his disciples,

Blessed are the eyes that see what ye see. (Blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear—M.) For I say to you many prophets and kings (just men—M) desired to see what yourselves see and they saw it not, and to hear what ye hear and they heard it not.

*Parable of the Good Samaritan (L. 10)*

Luke next relates the parable of the Good Samaritan and the episode of Martha and Mary at Bethany, and their place in the gospel suggests that it was at or near Bethany that the preceding conversation had occurred. The scene of the story was the nearby road from Jerusalem to Jericho. It was a scribe or lawyer who gave occasion for the parable by his questions. 'Master,' he asked, 'what am I to do that I may inherit everlasting life?' Jesus replied,

What is written in the Law? How readest thou?

He said, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole strength, and with thy whole mind, and thy neighbour as thyself.' Jesus said,

Thou hast answered rightly. This do and thou shalt live.

Then the scribe put the question, 'And who is my neighbour?' Jesus answered by a parable.

A certain man was going from Jerusalem down to Jericho;



### *Jesus in His Own Words*

and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and went their way, leaving him half dead. And a certain priest happened to be going down along that road, and he saw him and passed him by on the other side. And a Levite likewise came to the place, and saw him and passed him by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan as he journeyed came upon him, and seeing him was moved with compassion; and drawing near he bound up his wounds, pouring thereon wine and oil. And mounting him upon his own beast, he brought him to a hostel and took care of him. And on the morrow he took out two denarii and gave them to the host and said, 'Take care of him; and what more soever thou spendest, myself at my return will repay to thee.' Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved a neighbour to him who fell among the robbers?

The scribe replied, 'He that took pity on him.' Jesus said, Go, and do thou also in like manner.

Neighbourliness, like love, has its active and passive sense. When we use it in the active sense, we are apt to put all kinds of limitations and restrictions to our notion of 'neighbour', i.e. those to whom we should extend our sympathy and, in case of need, a helping hand; but when we use it in the passive sense, i.e. when we ourselves are in need of sympathy and assistance, then we are glad to receive them from anybody, without any limitations at all. That is what Jesus pointed out by changing the question, 'To whom should I behave as a neighbour?' into 'In which of these men did the wounded traveller find a neighbour?' When he was in health, the traveller, a Jew, would not have treated the Samaritan as a neighbour, but when he was afflicted he was only too thankful to be treated by him as a neighbour. In other words, the parable puts in dramatic form the lessons of the Sermon on the Mount, 'Love your enemies' and 'Do unto others as

you would they should do unto you.' We are all neighbours one of another because we are all children of the same heavenly Father, and there should be no limitations whatsoever in our exercise of humanity, fellow-feeling, sympathy, compassion, and where possible, active assistance and service.

*Martha and Mary (L. 10)*

'And whilst they were on their journey, Jesus entered a certain village, and a woman named Martha took him into her house.' Thus Luke, but John speaks of a Martha and Mary, evidently the same sisters, who lived at Bethany and had a brother named Lazarus, and he tells us too that Jesus 'loved Martha and her sister Mary and Lazarus', which implies that they had been acquainted for some time. It seems likely that when he visited Jerusalem, Jesus used to stay with them, as he certainly did before the last Passover. Martha was the mistress of the house and an energetic one, but Mary loved to sit at Jesus' feet and listen to him talking. One day, Luke tells us, Martha, 'harassed with much ministering', came up and reproached Jesus with keeping Mary from her household duties. Jesus said to her,

Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about many things; few are needed—or only one. Yea, Mary hath chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her.

Jesus may have remembered the words of the Psalmist, 'Jehovah is my appointed portion and my cup (Ps. 15, 5).' His words are 'the charter' of the contemplative life, which Mary of Bethany typifies, while her sister Martha is the type of the active life of good works. The words 'few are needed—or only one' probably refer to the dishes Martha was preparing for their meal.



## *Jesus in His Own Words*

### *The Lord's Prayer (M. 6; Mk. 11; L. 11)*

It was near Bethany, as we gather from Luke—and tradition has assigned a spot on the Mount of Olives—that Jesus first uttered the 'Our Father'. Jesus had been standing apart from the disciples, engaged in prayer, and when he returned to them, one of them said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, as John likewise taught his disciples.' Jesus then said,

In your prayers, babble not [i.e. use unintelligible formulae or utter prayers mechanically] as do the gentiles; for they think to be heard by reason of their wordiness. Be not therefore like to them, for your heavenly Father knoweth what things ye need before ye ask him. Pray ye, therefore, thus:

Our Father in the heavens, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, as in heaven so on earth. Give us this day (each day—L.) our daily bread, and forgive us our debts (sins—L.), as ourselves have forgiven our debtors (For ourselves likewise forgive every debtor of ours—L.), and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Whosoever ye stand at prayer, forgive if ye have aught against anyone, that your Father who is in heaven may likewise forgive you your transgressions—Mk. For if ye forgive men their transgressions, your heavenly Father will likewise forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their transgressions, neither will your Father forgive you your transgressions—M.

The Lord's Prayer is at once a summary of Jesus' teaching and a programme of Christian living. It consists of two parts, each with three clauses; the first part is concerned with the glory of God, the second with the needs of men. The first three clauses express what was the dominant *motif* of Jesus' own life, the fulfilment of what he called 'the first and greatest' of the commandments. The simple petition for

'our daily bread' (i.e. bread sufficient for each day) reflects his teaching in the Sermon on the Mount on trust without anxiety and will also have recalled his saying, 'I am the bread of life.' It may be mentioned that in the 'Gospel according to the Hebrews,' this petition runs: 'Give us this day our bread of the morrow'; St. Jerome took this to mean: 'The bread which thou wilt give us in thy kingdom, give us this day.' The clause about forgiveness sums up Jesus' most frequently repeated teaching that our conduct towards others should be modelled on God's conduct towards us, or what we want that to be. The final petition is that God will protect us from and in temptation, and preserve us from sin. In the Jewish idiom God was said to do whatever he permitted to happen—hence the turn of phrase, 'Lead us not into temptation.' God does not tempt man to sin, but he allows him to be tempted.

*Parable of the Importunate Friend (L. 11; M. 7)*

If one of you had a friend, and he went unto him at midnight and said to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves: for a friend of mine is come to my house on a journey and I have naught to set before him': and if from within he were to answer and say, 'Trouble me not: the door is now shut and my children are abed with me: I cannot rise and give to thee': I say to you, that even though he will not rise and give to him for his friendship's sake, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him all that he needeth.

And I say to you: ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened [cf. Chap. 3: Various Teachings].

Jesus himself drew the moral of the above parable; it was



that we should pray with confidence and persevere<sup>1</sup> in our petitions. If what we ask is according to the mind of Jesus Christ, e.g. for God's Spirit and his grace, our prayer will certainly be granted. We may also ask for temporal favours—we may lawfully ask for whatever we may lawfully desire—only here, Jesus was to show by his own example in the Garden of Gethsemane how we should present our petitions, namely with the qualification, 'Yet not my will but thine be done.'

But why make petitions at all, it may be asked, if 'our heavenly Father knows what we need before we ask him?' By these words, however, Jesus did not mean to disparage the prayer of petition, since he went on to urge precisely that kind of prayer. God wishes us to open our hearts to him in prayer, not for his own information but for our good. 'It is to draw you near to God by the habit of prayer, to humble you, and to remind you of your sins,' says St. John Chrysostom. And St. Augustine says that the best preparation for receiving God's graces is the desire that grows in us through prayer.

*Source of Jesus' Power over Devils (M. 9 and 12; Mk. 3; L. 11)*

Luke then relates the cure of a dumb man who was possessed. Matthew has a similar miracle earlier in Galilee, and here he speaks of a blind and dumb demoniac. In all three, the cure leads to the taunt, made by certain Pharisees, 'It is by Beezebul, the prince of devils, that he casteth out devils.' Jesus knowing their thoughts, said to them,

<sup>1</sup> A Saying found in the Oxyrhynchus papyri and also quoted by Clement of Alexandria:

Let not him that seeketh cease from seeking till he find, and when he findeth he shall marvel, and having marvelled he shall reign, and having reigned he shall rest.

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How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a household (or city—M.) be divided against itself, that household (or city—M.) cannot stand, and if Satan hath risen against himself and is divided, he cannot stand—he is come to an end. (How then shall his kingdom stand?—M.) And if I by Bezebul cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? They, therefore, shall be your judges. But if by the spirit (finger—L.) of God I cast out devils, then is the kingdom of God come upon you. When the strong man fully armed guardeth his court, his belongings are secure; but when a mightier than he cometh upon him and conquereth him, he taketh away his panoply [armour] whereon he had relied, and divideth his spoils. (No man can enter the strong man's house and plunder his goods unless he first bind the strong man; then indeed shall he plunder his house—Mk.) He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.

Satan has installed himself in the world and made it his home, but Jesus has come with the power of God to drive him out and replace the reign of Satan by the reign of God. Between the two there can be no compromise. He who is not for Jesus is against him. It was in regard to quite a different case that Jesus said, 'He who is not against me is with me' (cf. Chap. 5: Talks with Disciples).

### *Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost (M. 12; Mk. 3; L. 6 and 12)*

Wherefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven men, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this world or in the world to come. [Whosoever blas-



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phemeth against the Holy Spirit never hath forgiveness, but is guilty of an everlasting sin—Mk.]

Mark explains that by 'blasphemy against the Spirit' Jesus meant the sin of the Pharisees in attributing the works performed by Jesus—works which bore the stamp of the Holy Spirit—to the power of the devil, to Beezebul. A person might be pardoned for hesitating to accept Jesus as the Messiah and still more as a Divine being, but to say that he was possessed by a devil was to shut one's eyes to the light, or rather to call light itself darkness. Prejudice so wilful and so malicious could rarely if ever be overcome. The pious talk of the Pharisees was nothing but hypocrisy because their hearts were filled with evil.

Either make the tree good, and the fruit thereof good, or make the tree bad and the fruit thereof bad; for by the fruit is the tree known. Brood of vipers, how can ye who are evil speak things that are good? For from the fullness of the heart the mouth speaketh. The good man from his (heart's—L.) good store bringeth forth good things; and the evil man from his evil store bringeth forth evil things. (For from the fullness of his heart his mouth speaketh—L.) But I say to you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words shalt thou be justified, and by thy words condemned.

The last two sentences would seem to have been addressed to a very different auditory, and to have been added here by Matthew according to his custom of grouping together sayings uttered on various occasions.

When an unclean spirit is gone forth from a man, he roameth through waterless places, seeking where to rest, and he findeth not. Then he saith, 'I will return to my house, whence I came forth.' And coming, he findeth it vacant, and

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swept and garnished. Then he goeth and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and entering they dwell there; and the last state of that man is made worse than the first. Thus also shall it be with this wicked generation.

Commentators say that here Jesus was warning the Jews that if they did not take advantage of his victory over Satan and enter the kingdom of God, they risked finding themselves in a still worse state than before he came. Jesus spoke of the devils according to the ideas of his time; it was generally believed that deserts and ruins were particularly frequented by demons (cf. Tob. 8, 3; Isa. 13, 21 and 34, 14).

#### *The Sign of Jonah (M. 12; L. 11)*

Some scribes and Pharisees present there asked Jesus for 'a sign' (cf. Chap. 5: Feeding of the Four Thousand). Jesus replied,

A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh for a sign, and a sign shall not be given it, except the sign of Jonah the prophet. (As Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites, even so shall the Son of Man be to this generation—L.) For as Jonah was in the belly of the whale three days and three nights, even so shall the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights. The men of Nineveh shall rise up at the judgment with this generation and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, there is more than Jonah here! The queen of the South [Saba, in Southern Arabia] shall rise at the judgment with this generation and shall condemn it; for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, there is more than Solomon here!

The true 'sign' was the sublimity of Jesus' teaching and the holiness of his life and works. But, Jesus repeats in other



words, the Pharisees by perverting their understanding had shut their eyes to the light.

No one lighteth a lamp and putteth it into a cellar or under the bushel, but upon the lampstand, that they who enter may see the light. The lamp of thy body is thine eye. When thine eye is sound, thy whole body also has light; but when it is evil, thy body also is in darkness. See then whether the very light within thee be not darkness. If then thy whole body have light, without any part thereof being in darkness, it will all be illumined as when the lamp with its brilliance doth illumine thee. (If then the very light which is within thee is darkness, how great the darkness itself!—M. 6—cf. Chap. 3: The Christian Ideal.)

*Against Pharisaic Hypocrisy (L. 11; M. 23)*

One of the Pharisees present invited Jesus to dine with him, and when he had come, the host noticed with surprise that his guest did not wash before eating (cf. Chap. 5: Pharisaic Opposition). Evidently the omission was deliberate on Jesus' part, for he proceeded to say,

Now ye Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but within ye are full of extortion and wickedness. Foolish men! Did not he who made the outside, make the inside too? Yet give alms according to your means, and behold all things are clean unto you. (Clean first the inside of the cup and the dish, that their exterior too may be clean—M.)

The saying about alms comes as a surprise, and Matthew's conclusion is more logical. But Catholic commentators take the former literally, i.e. a recommendation of alms-giving as a means of purifying the heart. Erasmus thought that Jesus was speaking ironically, 'Then give alms, and think that that covers everything!' Luke adds here a series of denunciations

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against the Pharisees, which Matthew reports Jesus as uttering in the last days of his earthly life, at Jerusalem, and we shall quote them there. Jesus, however, was in no doubt about the animosity with which the Pharisees regarded him or their intentions towards him and his followers.

*Prepares Disciples for Persecution (M. 10; L. 6 and 12)*

Both Matthew and Luke report the following discourse, but with differences which make it advisable to give both:

A disciple is not above his master, nor a servant above his lord. Enough for the disciple that he fare as his master, and the servant as doth his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beezebul, how much more those of his household! Wherefore fear them not. For there is naught covered that shall not be laid bare, naught hidden that shall not become known. What I tell you in the darkness, speak ye in the light; and what is whispered in your ear, preach ye upon the housetops. Have no fear of them that kill the body, but cannot kill the soul; but fear ye rather him that can destroy both soul and body in hell [Gehenna]. Are not two sparrows sold for one as [a sixteenth part of a denarius]? And not one of them falleth to the ground without your Father. But as for you, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Wherefore fear ye not; ye are of greater worth than many sparrows. Everyone, therefore, that shall confess me before men, him I also shall confess before my Father who is in the heavens; but he that shall deny me before men, him I also shall deny before my Father who is in the heavens. . . . But when they deliver you up, have no care how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given to you in that hour what to speak; for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaketh in you. (M.)

A disciple is not above his master; but everyone fully instructed shall be as his master. . . . There is naught covered



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up that shall not be laid bare, naught hidden that shall not become known. For all that ye have said in the darkness shall be heard in the light; and what ye have spoken unto the ear, in the store-rooms, shall be preached upon the house-tops. I say to you who are my friends: Have no fear of them that kill the body, and after that have naught else they can do. But I will shew you whom ye are to fear: fear ye him who after having killed has power to cast into hell [Gehenna]. Yea, I say to you, him fear ye. Are not five sparrows sold for two as [an eighth part of a denarius]? And not one of them is forgotten before God. Nay, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; ye are of greater worth than many sparrows. And I say to you, whosoever shall confess me before men, him the Son of Man also shall confess before the angels of God; but he that hath denied me before men, shall be denied before the angels of God. . . . And when they bring you before the synagogues and the magistrates and the authorities, have no care how ye shall make your defence or what ye shall say, for the Holy Spirit shall teach you in that hour what ye ought to say (L.).

#### *Parable of the Rich Fool (L. 12)*

A crowd had gathered, and a man approached Jesus and said, 'Master, bid my brother divide the inheritance with me.' Jesus replied,

O man, who hath appointed me judge or divider over you?

And turning to the people he said,

Take heed and keep ye from all cupidity, for a man's life doth not consist in the abundance of his belongings.

Then he told them a parable:

The land of a certain rich man brought forth abundantly.

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And he debated within him, saying, 'What am I to do, seeing that I have not where to store my crops?' And he said, 'This will I do; I will pull down my barns and build larger, and there I will gather all my grain and my goods: and I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast many good things laid up for many years: take thy rest, eat, drink, make merry'. But God said to him, 'Thou fool, this very night do they demand thy soul of thee; and the things thou hast provided, whose shall they be?' So it is with him that hoardeth for himself and is not rich unto God'.

The parable shows from the uncertainty of human possessions the folly of placing all one's hopes in them. They are only means to serve God, and if we use them as such then we shall have credit with God when the goods themselves are left behind. Luke adds here Jesus' words about the birds of the air and the lilies of the field, which Matthew includes in the Sermon on the Mount (cf. Chap. 3: On Worldly Cares), and concludes:

Fear not, thou little flock, for it hath pleased your Father to give you the kingdom. Sell what ye have and give alms; make for yourselves purses that grow not old, a treasure unfailing in the heavens, where thief approacheth not neither doth moth destroy. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

#### *Parables on Vigilance (L. 12; Mk. 13; M. 24)*

Jesus used three comparisons to teach his disciples that they should so live as not to be taken unprepared either by his Second Coming or by death: in other words that their fidelity to his teaching must never grow slack. The first was that of servants whose master was away from home, either on a journey (M.), or at a wedding (L.).

Let your loins be girt and your lamps burning, and your-



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selves like men awaiting their master's return from the wedding-feast, that when he cometh and knocketh they may straightway open to him. Blessed those servants whom the master when he cometh shall find watching! Amen, I say to you, he will gird himself and will make them recline and will come and minister to them. And be it in the second watch or be it in the third that he come and find them thus, blessed are they!

In the above illustration Jesus was not afraid to depart from verisimilitude in order to show God's infinite condescension towards his human creatures. The next comparison was that of a householder and a thief.

But of this be assured, that had the master of the house known at what hour the thief was coming, he would have watched and would not have let his house be broken open. Be ye also ready, for at the hour that ye think not the Son of Man is to come.

Peter asked whether these words of Jesus were meant for everybody or only for the disciples, and Jesus replied by a third comparison, that of a steward, whose master was absent.

Who then is the faithful, the wise steward, whom the master shall set over those in his service, to give out their ration of corn (their food—M.) at the due time? Blessed that servant whom his master when he cometh shall find so doing! Truly I say to you, he will set him over all his belongings. But if that servant say in his heart, 'My master is late coming,' and begin to strike the men-servants and the maids, to eat and drink and be drunken, the master of that servant shall come on a day that he thinketh not, and at an hour that he knoweth not, and shall cut him asunder and assign his lot with the unfaithful (the hypocrites. There shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth—M.). That servant who knew his master's will and who made not ready nor did ac-

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according to his will shall be beaten with many stripes; but he who knew it not and did things deserving of stripes shall be beaten with few. To whomsoever much hath been given, of him shall much be required; and to whom they have entrusted much, of him shall they demand the more.

The answer to Peter's question was that, while the exhortation to vigilance applied to all God's servants, it applied with special force to those in positions of responsibility and confidence in God's household. Those who abused their trust would be punished severely, and those who were only guilty of negligence less severely.

*Future Trials (M. 10; L. 12)*

Thinking of the future, Jesus broke off his lesson on vigilance to utter a mysterious warning of the trials which awaited his followers, and of which his own Passion would be only the commencement.

I have come to cast fire upon the earth, and what will I, if it hath already been kindled? But I have a baptism wherewith to be baptized, and how I am straitened until it be accomplished! Think ye that I am here to give peace upon the earth? Nay, I tell you, but division. (Think not that I have come to cast peace upon the earth; I have come not to cast peace, but a sword—M.) For henceforth, in one house five shall be divided among themselves, three against two, and two against three: father shall be divided against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law. (And a man's enemies shall be of his own household—M.)

The 'baptism' of which Jesus spoke was his Passion, which he envisaged as deep waters into which he was to be plunged, and it would seem that the 'fire' was the purifying furnace of



trials and persecutions which his followers would pass through. Not the least of these trials would be the enmity of their own kindred. The opening sentence is obscure, and the Vulgate renders it: 'and what will I but that it be kindled?', i.e. 'what better wish can I have than that it should be kindled?' (Knox.) Another interpretation of the fire is love, charity, the fire of the Holy Spirit.<sup>1</sup>

*Reading the Signs of the Times (M. 5; L. 12)*

Addressing the crowd, Jesus said,

When ye see a cloud rise up in the west, straightway ye say 'There cometh rain,' and so it befalleth. And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, 'There will be heat,' and so it befalleth. Ye hypocrites, ye can judge of the face of the earth and of the heavens; how is it that ye cannot judge of this time? Nay, why do ye not of your own selves judge what is just? Even so, when thou art going to the magistrate with thine adversary, have a care to be quit of him while on the way; lest perchance he drag thee before the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the exactor, and the exactor cast thee into prison. I say to thee, thou shalt not go out thence till thou have paid the very last mite.

Jesus had used similar language about 'signs' to the Pharisees in Galilee (cf. Chap 5: Feeding of the Four Thousand). But even without signs, they should have sufficient judgment not to delay putting themselves right with God. Jesus emphasized this lesson with a parable of two men, opposing parties in a suit, on their way to court. If it was advisable to settle a lawsuit out of court, for fear of its going against them, much more was it necessary not to risk the adverse judgment of

<sup>1</sup> Origen quotes this Saying of Our Lord:

He that is near me is near the fire. He that is far from me is far from the kingdom.

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God. The implication was that they could do this by believing in Jesus Christ and obtaining pardon of their sins through him.

*Misfortunes not always Judgments (L. 13)*

Some newcomers arrived with tidings of a massacre of Galileans that had taken place in Jerusalem. Jesus made use of their news to enforce the lesson he was teaching:

Think ye that because these Galileans have suffered thus, they were sinners more than all the other Galileans? Nay, I tell you; but unless ye repent, ye shall all perish in like manner. Or those eighteen men upon whom fell the tower of Siloam and killed them—think ye that they of all the men that dwell in Jerusalem were the worst offenders? Nay, I tell you; but unless ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

*Parable of Barren Fig-tree (L. 13)*

A certain man had a fig-tree, planted in his vineyard and he came seeking fruit thereon and he found none. So he said unto the vinedresser, 'Behold, for now three years I come seeking fruit upon this fig-tree, and I find none. Cut it down; why doth it render the ground also idle?' But he answered and said to him, 'Leave it, master, this year too, till I dig round about it and dung it; and if next year it bring forth fruit—good. But if not, thou shalt cut it down!'

In its immediate context, the parable was a warning to the Jewish people represented by the fig-tree, in continuation of what Jesus had previously been saying. Luke alone records the parable, but Matthew and Mark relate a similar lesson given in connection with a real fig-tree, during Jesus' last days at Jerusalem (cf. Chap. 8: The Barren Fig-Tree).

*The Number of the Elect (L. 13)*

In the course of Jesus' journeyings, the question was put



to him, 'Lord, shall they be few that are saved?' The questioner seems to have been a Jew who thought that salvation was the birthright of the Jews, for Jesus replied,

Strive to enter by the narrow door, for many, I tell you, shall seek to enter and shall not be able, when once the master of the house hath risen and shut the door, and ye begin to stand without and to knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, open to us'. And he shall answer and say to you, 'I know not whence ye are'. Then shall ye begin to say, 'We did eat and drink in thy presence, and thou taughtest in our streets'. And he shall say to you, 'I know not whence ye are; depart from me all ye workers of iniquity.' There shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves cast forth without. And they shall come from east and west and from north and south, and shall feast in the kingdom of God. And behold, they that shall be first are last, and they that shall be last are first.

Jesus had spoken in the Sermon on the Mount (as reported by Matthew) of the narrow gate and the narrow way that leads to life, adding 'few are they who find it' (cf. Chap. 3: Various Teachings). Now the point was stressed that Jews as such would not have free right of entry; on the contrary many Jews would be excluded, while the Gentiles they despised would be admitted. They should, therefore, 'keep on striving' to enter, while the door was still open. Matthew, in the section referred to above, states the conditions of finding admission: 'Not any one who calls me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven; only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.' And the Father's will in particular was that they should believe in Jesus Christ (cf. Chap. 4: Sermon on the Bread of Life).

*Herod the Fox (L. 13)*

While Jesus was in Herod's territory, probably Peraea, some Pharisees came and gave him the warning, 'Depart and go thy way hence, for Herod wisheth to kill thee.' It may have been Herod himself who inspired this warning, in order to get Jesus to leave his country, for Jesus replied,

Go, tell that fox, behold, I cast out devils and effect cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I am to accomplish my course. Nevertheless to-day and to-morrow and the next day I must be going on my way hence, for it is not meet that a prophet perish outside Jerusalem.

It was God who had fixed the duration of Jesus' ministry and the hour of his death, and no scheme of Herod's could interfere with God's plan. But Jesus would indeed be leaving Herod's territory shortly because the appointed place for his death was Jerusalem.

*Parable of the More Honourable Seats (L. 14)*

Having been invited to a meal at the house of a leading Pharisee (cf. Chap. 3: Other Cures on the Sabbath), Jesus noticed how eager the guests were to occupy the first couches at table. He spoke a parable on the subject:

When thou art invited by anyone to a marriage-feast, do not lay thee down upon the first couch, lest perchance one more honourable than thou have been invited by him, and when he who invited thee and him is come he will say to thee, 'Give this man place'; and then thou shalt begin with shame to take the last place. But when thou art invited, go and recline in the last place, that when he who invited thee come he say to thee, 'Friend, come up higher.' Then shalt thou have glory in sight of all thy fellow-guests. For everyone that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.



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A noted rabbi or teacher, invited to dinner, was expected to give the company a moral discourse, in much the same way as in later ages wits or conversationalists were asked out to display their talent. But Jesus' choice of subject here was decidedly his own, although he avoided making it too personal by talking of 'a marriage-feast'. Jesus took his examples from life as it is—the unjust judge, the dishonest steward, and here the vulgar but only too common failing of wanting to be esteemed above one's neighbours. It might appear that Jesus was recommending a calculating and feigned humility that hopes to be invited to 'come up higher'. But the Master's thought, as always, has risen from earth to heaven, from the banquet on earth to the heavenly 'wedding feast'. There, only genuine humility will be appropriately rewarded. In the light of the concluding sentence, we see that it is this genuine humility Jesus was teaching. And, incidentally, genuine Christian humility and charity are an infallible guide to true politeness and good manners here on earth. Jesus went on to say to his host,

When thou givest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, or thy brethren, or thy kinsmen, or rich neighbours, lest perchance they likewise invite thee in return, and it serve as thy reward. But when thou givest a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind; and blessed shalt thou be, in that they have not wherewith to reward thee, for thou shalt be rewarded at the resurrection of the just.

Although not in the form of a parable, Jesus was in effect uttering a second parable; the first was on the choice of seats, the second on the choice of guests. And the lesson of the second parable—a lesson that Jesus repeatedly taught—was that the less self-interest there is in our actions, the more pleasing these are to God, who will reward them 'at the resurrection of the just.' Taking up this concluding phrase,

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one of the guests exclaimed, 'Blessed is he that shall feast in the kingdom of God!' Jesus may have scented Pharisaic self-complacency in the pious platitude, for he replied by a parable which said plainly that it was not enough to be invited to the heavenly banquet but that it was necessary to respond to the invitation, which too many Jews were refusing to do.

#### *Parable of the Great Supper (L. 14)*

A certain man was giving a great supper; and he had invited many. And at the hour of the supper he sent forth his servant to say to those invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.' And they all began with one accord to excuse themselves. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field and must needs go forth to see it; I pray thee, hold me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen and I go to try them; I pray thee hold me excused.' And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' And the servant came and told his lord of all these things. Then the master of the house was angry and said to his servant, 'Go forth quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the crippled, and the blind, and the lame.' And the servant said, 'My lord, thy bidding is done, and still there is room.' And the lord said unto the servant, 'Go out unto the highways and hedges and compel them to enter, in order that my house may be filled; for I tell you, not one of those men that were invited shall taste of my supper.

This parable teaches that it is easy to miss God's call through attachment to worldly interests. While the Pharisees and other Jewish leaders rejected Jesus' invitation, the people they despised—the publicans and sinners—came to listen to him; and the opportunity which the Jewish people as a whole



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had missed would be offered to the Gentiles (cf. Chap. 8: Parables of the Marriage Feast and the Wedding Garment).

*Detachment Demanded of Christ's Disciples (M. 10; L. 14)*

'Great multitudes were flocking to Jesus and going along with him,' says Luke. On one occasion he turned and warned them that any one wishing to be his disciple must be prepared for renunciation, even of the closest human ties, adding two little parables on the importance of counting the cost before taking so hazardous a step. In Matthew this warning follows Jesus' words to his disciples about future trials and the possible hostility of kinsmen and friends (cf. Chap. 7: Future Trials). The latter eventuality was evidently in Jesus' mind here. We give both versions:

He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and whoso taketh not his cross and followeth after me is not worthy of me. He that hath found his life shall lose it; and he that hath lost his life for my sake shall find it (M.).

If anyone come unto me and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brothers and sisters, yea and his very life, he cannot be my disciple. Whosoever doth not carry his cross and follow me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, if he would build a tower, doth not first sit down and count the cost, whether he have wherewith to complete it? Lest perchance if he have laid the foundation and cannot finish, all who behold begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and could not finish.' Or what king who goeth to encounter another king in battle, will not first sit down and consider whether with ten thousand men he is able to meet his opponent who with twenty thousand is coming against him? Otherwise, whilst this latter is yet afar off, he sendeth delegates and sueth for terms of peace.

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Even so, therefore, whosoever among you doth not take leave of all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. Salt is indeed good; but if salt become itself insipid, wherewith shall it be seasoned? [cf. Chap. 5: Duty of avoiding occasions of sin]. It is useless both for the land and for the dung-heap; men cast it forth. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear (L.).

The meaning of 'hating father and mother' in Luke is explained by the parallel passage in Matthew, 'He that loveth father and mother more than me is not worthy of me.' Similarly, in Proverbs 13, 24: 'Whoso withholdeth the rod, hateth his son: and whoso loveth him, chastiseth him be-times.' Discipleship is God's service and so demands a detachment similar to that required of the Levites (cf. Chap. 4: Jesus' True Kindred). When the will of God has been made clear to us, we have to be ruthless in putting aside the obstacles which would prevent our carrying it out. In the case of converts it is often from relatives that such obstacles come, especially in times of persecution or when religious feeling runs high. He who would be Christ's disciple, therefore, should first count the cost and see if he is prepared to sacrifice possessions, family, his good name and even his life for Christ. No less is demanded of Christ's disciples, because they are 'the salt of the earth', destined to preserve it from spiritual corruption and render it acceptable to God.

### *Parables of Lost Sheep and Lost Coin (L. 15)*

'Publicans and sinners' formed a noticeable part of the crowds that used to gather to hear Jesus, a fact that drew the acid comment from the Pharisees, 'This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them.' To them therefore Jesus repeated a parable which he had already given to the disciples (cf. Chap. 5: Parable of the Lost Sheep).



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What man of you, if he have a hundred sheep and lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after that which is lost until he find it? And when he hath found it, he putteth it upon his shoulders, rejoicing; and on coming home he calleth together his friends and his neighbours and saith to them, 'Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep which was lost.' I say to you, even so shall there be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth rather than over ninety-nine just who have no need of repentance.

Or what woman who hath ten drachmas, if she lose one drachma, doth not light a lamp and sweep the house and search carefully until she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth together her friends and neighbours and saith, 'Rejoice with me, because I have found the drachma which I lost.' Even so, I say to you, cometh joy to the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

Both parables teach that God's love and mercy and active benevolence extend to each individual sinner as though he or she were his chief concern. Then Jesus went on to give a third parable, the most beautiful of all his parables, on the same theme:

#### *The Prodigal Son (L. 15)*

A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to the father, 'Father, give me the share of the property which falleth to me.' And he divided his means [substance] among them. And not many days later, the younger son gathered up all his wealth and went from home into a far country; and there he squandered his inheritance, living prodigally. And after he had spent all, there came a mighty famine over that country, and himself began to suffer want. And he went and cleaved [attached himself] to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his farm to feed the swine. And he longed to have his fill of [fill his belly with]

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the pods [carob-pods] whereof the swine did eat, but no man gave unto him. And entering into himself he said, 'How many of my father's hirelings have bread in abundance, whilst I here perish of hunger! I will arise and go unto my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee: I am no longer worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hirelings.' And he arose and came unto his father. And while he was yet a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with compassion, and ran and fell upon his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee: I am no longer worthy to be called thy son.' But the father said unto his servants, 'Fetch quickly the richest robe and clothe him therewith: and put a ring upon his hand, and shoes upon his feet: and bring the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry, because this my son was dead, and he hath come to life again; he was lost, and he is found'.

And they began to make merry. Now his elder son was in the fields. And when he came and drew nigh to the house, he caught the sound of music and dancing. And he called up one of the servants and enquired what these things meant. He said to him, 'Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf because he hath received him safely back'. And he was angry and would not go in. And his father came out and besought him. But he answered and said to his father, 'Behold, so many years I serve thee and have never transgressed thy command, and to me thou never hast given a kid that I might make merry with my friends; but when this thy son hath come, who hath devoured thy substance with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf!' And he said to him, 'Thou, my child, art always with me, and all things mine are thine; but it behoved us to make merry and to rejoice, because this thy brother was dead, and he hath come to life; he was lost, and he is found.'

This parable, like the two preceding it, was an answer to the



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Pharisees' complaint that Jesus seemed to prefer to associate with 'sinners' rather than with the 'just', among whom they counted themselves. For the moment Jesus did not dispute their claim to be 'just'; he took them at their own valuation, and confined himself to explaining God's mercy towards 'sinners'. What is the sinner? He is a child of God who has thrown off his Father's control and left home, who no longer acknowledges any dependence upon his Father but tries to be sufficient unto himself. For a while all seems to go well with him, but eventually he finds that he has made a complete mess of his life and achieved nothing but waste and ruin. Happily for the sinner in the parable, he is able to realize the true cause of his misery, his radical mistake; it is to have left the Father's house and tried to be independent, and he resolves to return, penitent and humble. Better to be a servant in his Father's house than his own master, which only ends in servitude to sin. But the Father on his part is only too ready to welcome back the penitent son and to restore him to his former place in the family. Such is God's merciful attitude towards the sinner. 'As I live, saith the Lord God, I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways: and why will you die, O house of Israel?' (Ezek. 33, 11). But more powerful in its appeal even than this moving word of the prophet is Jesus' unforgettable word-picture of the loving, forgiving Father.

Popular interest concentrates on the first part of the parable, as though it were the whole. In fact, it is the second part which contains the main lesson of the parable. The elder son, resentful of the welcome given to the returning prodigal, clearly corresponds to the Pharisees complaining of Jesus' association with 'sinners'. In the Father's reply is therefore contained Jesus' answer to the Pharisees. But first Jesus

had most skilfully exposed the fundamental error of the Pharisees in the complaint of the elder son—that his Father had never rewarded him for his services. Their fundamental error was to regard the relationship between man and God as *merely* one of service and reward, work and return. But these were the thoughts of a servant, not of a son. By an altogether unmerited favour, God has made us his own children, and puts at our service all that he has. The benefits showered on the returning prodigal were not rewards, but only marks of the Father's love and joy at his return. All that matters is to be God's loving child, safe in the Father's house and ever eager to do the Father's will. Thus by means of this simple story did Jesus give his finest exposition of what he had come to teach and to achieve, the return of man to his true relationship with God, that of son and Father. 'Sinners' had to be brought back, but the Pharisees too, even if they were not 'sinners', had to acquire a new conception of what that relationship meant. This parable also teaches us how Christians should regard and behave towards repentant sinners and all 'converts'. Many 'good people', who never do anything very wrong themselves, have little love for the returning sinner, and their apostolic spirit is practically nil. It may be that in reality they have little love for God or zeal for his glory, that they accept their position in God's family as their due, instead of as God's mercy, that they are infected by the Pharisaic spirit of self-complacency.

Luke next records another parable, without any reference to the circumstances in which it was uttered:

*Parable of the Dishonest Steward (L. 16)*

There was a certain rich man who had a steward, who was denounced unto him as squandering his possessions. And he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear of thee?



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Render the account of thy stewardship, for thou canst be steward no longer.' And the steward said within himself, 'What am I to do, seeing that my master is taking away the stewardship from me? To dig I am not able; to beg I am ashamed—I know what I shall do, that when I am removed from the stewardship they may receive me into their homes.' And he summoned each of his master's debtors, and he said to the first, 'How much owest thou to my master?' and he said, 'A hundred firkins of oil' [a firkin equals nine gallons]. He said to him 'Take thy bond, and sit down and forthwith write fifty.' Then he said to another, 'And how much dost thou owe?' And he said, 'A hundred quarters of wheat' [a quarter equals ten bushels]. He saith to him, 'Take thy bond and write eighty.' And the master commended the unjust steward for having acted wisely; for the children of this world are wiser with their own generation than are the children of the light. And I do say to you: make friends for yourselves by the mammon of wickedness, that when it shall fail they may receive you into the everlasting dwellings. One worthy of trust in a very little, is worthy also in much; and one unjust in a very little, is also unjust in much. If in regard of the wicked mammon, then, ye have not proved faithful, who will entrust you with true riches? And if in regard of others' goods ye have not proved faithful, who will give you aught for your own? No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will cleave to one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Needless to say, Jesus neither endorsed the rich man's commendation of his steward's dishonesty nor was he teaching his disciples to be dishonest. He merely took a current example of sharp-practice in business and advised his disciples to be no less alert and far-sighted in their use of money (mammon) for spiritual ends. The dishonest steward by his

trickery made friends who would take him in when he should lose his present post. Jesus exhorted his hearers to use their temporal goods in such a way as to make friends who would in due course take them 'into the everlasting dwellings'. Commentators interpret these 'friends' as the poor, who would have received the disciple's money in alms; and there was a rabbinical proverb which said, 'The rich help the poor in this world, but the poor help the rich in the world to come.' But while Jesus invited those who wished to follow him more closely to give away all they possessed to the poor, he did not impose this obligation on all his disciples. The lesson of the parable would be heeded by all who used their goods in such a way as to gain credit in heaven. Incidentally this parable implies that good actions will receive a proportionate reward hereafter, and that it is not wrong to perform such actions with that reward in view. In the passage which follows the parable, and in the same line of thought, the comparison would be between temporal and eternal goods. The former are only lent to us; the latter are 'the true riches' and 'your own' promised portion. Lagrange, Prat and others, however, think the 'true riches' are the spiritual graces and charisms which will later be conferred on the disciples when the time comes for them to guide the infant Church. It may also be deduced from these words that those who make good use of the natural goods entrusted to them (talents, qualities, possessions, etc.) will not be refused the supernatural gift of God's grace. Hence the saying: 'To him who does the best he can God will not refuse his grace.'

'Now the Pharisees, who were fond of money, were listening to all these things, and they sneered [literally, turned up the nose] at him.' Jesus therefore said to them,



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Ye are they that pass yourselves off as just in the eyes of men, but God knoweth your hearts; for that which is exalted in men's eyes is an abomination before God.

Jesus then proceeded to illustrate this saying and to enforce his previous teaching by another parable:

#### *Parable of the Rich Man and the Beggar, Lazarus (L. 16)*

There was a certain rich man, who went clothed in purple and fine linen, and feasted in splendour every day. And a certain poor man, named Lazarus, lay at his gateway, full of sores, and longing the while to be filled with what fell from the rich man's table; yea, and the dogs would come and lick his sores. And it came to pass that the poor man died and was borne by the angels to Abraham's bosom; the rich man likewise died and was buried. And in hell [Hades], amid tortures, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham from afar, with Lazarus at his bosom. And he cried aloud and said, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and to cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Remember, my child, that thou didst receive thy good things in thy lifetime, and Lazarus likewise evil things; but now he is comforted here, and thou art tormented. And withal between us and you hath been set a great gulf, that they who should wish to pass hence unto you may not be able, and that they should not cross thence unto us.' And he said, 'Then, father, I ask thee to send him to my father's house—for I have five brethren—in order that he may testify to them, lest they too come to this place of torture.' And Abraham saith, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hearken unto them.' But he said, 'Nay, father Abraham, but if one from the dead go unto them they will repent.' But he said to him, 'If they do not hearken unto Moses and the prophets, they will not be persuaded even if one rise from the dead.'

One of the most familiar themes in Our Lord's preaching was that there will be no reward hereafter for those who have enjoyed themselves selfishly in this life, indifferent to the needs of others—'They have had their reward,' he used to say—but that those who suffer in this life and bear their suffering patiently and humbly will be compensated. This parable, addressed to the money-loving Pharisees, taught the same lesson, while throwing further light on the ultimate fate of the selfish rich and the God-fearing poor. The parable therefore is concerned with the use of temporal circumstances, wealth or poverty, as the case may be. The man who uses his wealth solely for his own pleasure, caring neither for God nor man, will be in torment and utter want; on the other hand the most grievous physical conditions can be so used as to merit eternal happiness. It is the selfish rich man who is the main figure, however, the beggar only figuring by way of contrast. In the previous parable of the Dishonest Steward, Jesus had taught the need of using temporal goods to prepare for eternity; here he showed what happened to one who had not used his temporal goods to prepare for eternity.

*Hades* is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew *Sheol*, which meant the abode of the dead in general, irrespective of whether they were good or bad, in peace or in torment. According to the ancients, it consisted of an upper and lower portion, the upper (variously spoken of as Eden, Paradise, Abraham's Bosom, or, by the Greeks, the Elysian Fields) was the abode of the just; the lower (Gehenna or Tartarus) was a place of torment for the wicked. The phrase 'Abraham's Bosom' may have arisen from the Jewish metaphor by which eternal happiness was spoken of as a banquet. Here the place of honour would be the couch next to the president of the feast, Abraham, and the person seated on that couch would have his head 'at Abraham's bosom'. What is meant in



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the parable is that the beggar, despised by men but acceptable to God, was transported to a place of honour in the abode of the just; while the rich man, honoured by men but abominable in the eyes of God, was cast into the place of ignominy and torment. The details of the parable are clearly not to be taken literally as a description of the future life, about which in fact Jewish ideas were extremely hazy (cf. *The Old Testament and the Future Life* by E. F. Sutcliffe, s.J.). Indeed, for the purpose of the parable, Jesus makes the dead feel and speak like men still living.

#### *Parable of Master and Servants (L. 17)*

Once, when discoursing to his disciples, Jesus said,

Now which of you, if he have a servant ploughing or pasturing, will say to him on his return from the fields, 'Come thou at once and recline at table'? Will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare my supper, and gird thee and minister unto me, whilst I eat and drink; and afterwards thou shalt thyself eat and drink'? Is he beholden to his servant for doing the things commanded? Even so ye also, when ye have done all the things commanded you, say ye, 'We are useless servants; we have but done what we were bound to do.'

'Useless' here means 'not specially meritorious'. The keeping of God's law does not confer a favour on God or put him under obligation to us. He is our Creator and Lord and has a right to our service. The parable teaches the spirit of humility which God's servants should ever maintain in his regard. The Pharisees, on the contrary, took credit to themselves for their religious observance.

#### *The Ten Lepers (L. 17)*

As Jesus was journeying between Samaria and Galilee, on the outskirts of a certain village he was hailed from afar by

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ten lepers, who cried out, 'Jesus, master, have pity on us.' Jesus replied,

Go, shew yourselves to the priests.

Although there was as yet no cure, they obeyed at once, and their faith was rewarded: 'as they went, they were made clean.' But to only one of the ten did it occur to return and thank his healer, and this one was a Samaritan. He came to Jesus and prostrated himself before him, thanking him. Jesus remarked,

Were not the ten made clean? Where are the nine? Hath none been found to return and give glory to God save this stranger?

And he said to him,

Rise and go thy way; thy faith hath healed thee.

*'When will the Kingdom Come?' (L. 17)*

Some Pharisees put to Jesus the question, 'When is the kingdom of God to come?' Jesus replied,

The kingdom of God cometh unawares; neither shall they say, Behold, 'tis here, or 'tis there. For behold, the kingdom of God is within you.

'Within you' has been interpreted as 'in your souls' and 'in your midst'; both interpretations have Catholic and Protestant supporters. Defending the former, Mgr. Dean, in the Westminster Version, says: 'The messianic kingdom is the realization of God's sovereignty over men, and implies both a visible outward realm—his Church—and the even more important but hidden inward rule and sovereignty over subject souls. . . . The Pharisees' question appears to anticipate some eventful and solemn inauguration of the realm, and



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Christ's reply appears to counter their false views by stressing the other and more important aspect of the kingdom—God's inward rule in the hearts of men.' This, it is urged, is in harmony with Jesus' other exhortations to the Pharisees, e.g. 'clean first the inside of the cup and the dish' (cf. Chap. 8: Denunciation of Scribes and Pharisees). On the other hand, it is argued that by saying it was 'unobserved' Jesus was speaking of something outward and visible, and that he would hardly have said that the kingdom was already in the souls of these Pharisees he was addressing. Thus Lagrange and Prat. The former interpretation, however, seems to be the more accurate lexically.<sup>1</sup>

#### *The Coming of Christ (L. 17)*

In contrast to this hidden and unobserved beginning of the kingdom, Jesus then spoke to his disciples of the manifest and unquestioned coming of the Son of Man at the last day:

The days shall come when ye shall long to see even one of the days of the Son of Man and ye shall not see it. And they shall say to you, 'Behold, he is there,' 'Behold, he is here'; go ye not forth nor follow after. For as the lightning when it lighteneth flasheth across the sky, so shall be the Son of Man on his day. But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. And as it befell in the days of Noah, so shall it also be in the days of the Son of Man. They were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were giving in marriage, until what day Noah went into the ark, and the deluge came and destroyed them all. So also it befell in the days of Lot. They were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting,

<sup>1</sup> Several apocryphal writings give the following reply of Jesus on another occasion when he was asked when his kingdom would come:

When the two shall be one, and the outside as the inside, and the male with the female neither male nor female.

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they were building; but the day that Lot came forth from Sodom, he [God] rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. The same shall it be upon the day that the Son of Man is revealed. On that day, he that shall be upon the house-top and his goods in the house, let him not come down to fetch them; and likewise he that is in the field, let him not turn back. Remember Lot's wife. Whosoever shall seek to secure his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose it shall preserve it. I say to you, that night two shall be on one bed, the one shall be taken and the other shall be left; two women shall be grinding together, the one shall be taken and the other shall be left.

And they said to him, 'Where, Lord?' He replied,

Where the body shall be, there also shall the vultures be gathered together.

'The days of the Son of Man', which the disciples would long to see, probably referred to his Second Coming, the expression 'the days' being used as a parallel to 'the days' of Noah and Lot. Lot's wife looked back regretfully when flying from Sodom; she is a warning not to cling to earthly possessions when the time comes to leave them. Nor should we cling to life itself. When the Son of Man appears, his elect will gather to him as surely and swiftly as vultures are drawn by a carcass—a familiar spectacle in the East.

### *Parable of the Judge and the Widow (L. 18)*

Continuing his discourse, Jesus, by a parable, impressed on the disciples that 'they ought to pray always and not to lose heart.'

There was a judge in a certain city who feared not God and respected not man. And there was a widow in that city who used to come unto him and say, 'Vindicate me against mine adversary.' And for a while he would not; but afterwards



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he said within himself, 'Even though I fear not God nor respect man, yet because this widow is a trouble to me I will vindicate her, lest she wear me out with her persistent coming' [or, 'lest in the end she should do me violence'].

Hear ye what the unjust judge doth say! And will not God vindicate his elect who cry to him day and night? And is he slow to act in their behalf? I say to you, he will take up their cause—and quickly. Yet, shall the Son of Man when he cometh find faith upon the earth?

This parable resembles that of the Importunate Friend (Chap. 7) but has special reference to prayer for deliverance from persecution, and in particular the persecutions which will precede the Second Coming of the Son of Man. This is the argument: If the unjust judge finished by granting the persistent prayer of the oppressed widow, *a fortiori* God, who is just and good, will respond to prayers made with perseverance by his persecuted children. There will be no failure on God's part, but, Jesus added, will there always be the faith that moves men to pray? The subsequent history of mankind has shown that there was only too much ground for this sad foreboding of the Master—and the greatest assaults against the Faith are perhaps still to come.

#### *Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican (L. 18)*

Prayer must not only be made with unwearying faith but also in a spirit of humility, and Luke follows with this parable, although it may have been uttered on another occasion. Jesus was speaking to 'some who trusted in themselves as being just and despised all others'—a characteristic attitude of the Pharisees.

Two men went up to the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed

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thus within himself: 'O God, I thank thee that I am not like the rest of men, swindlers, rogues, adulterers; or yet again like this publican. I fast twice a week; I pay tithe of all that I obtain.' But the publican, standing afar off, would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'O God, be merciful to me, the sinner.' I say to you, this one went down to his home justified, rather than the other; for everyone that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

In this parable Jesus brought together the two extremes in Jewish society, but the one that stood higher in the eyes of men was the lower in the eyes of God, and vice versa. This was because of the interior disposition of each in regard to God. The Pharisee uttered words of thanksgiving, while in fact he was not thanking God but boasting, taking credit to himself. Self-complacent and self-sufficient, he asked for nothing and received nothing. On the other hand, the Publican was sincere in avowing his sinfulness and his dependence upon God for forgiveness; he obtained the mercy he asked. Jesus stressed the contrast in the result between the sentence of 'justness' or righteousness which the Pharisee pronounced on himself and the sentence which God pronounced on the repentant and forgiven sinner. This saying, notes Edersheim, 'casts light also on such comparisons as between the righteous elder brother and the pardoned prodigal, or the ninety-nine "who have no need of repentance" and the lost that was found, or on such an utterance as this: "Unless your justness abound beyond that of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall not enter the kingdom of the heavens."'

This concludes the long section of St. Luke's Gospel which is peculiar to him (cf. Chap. 6: Chronology). It is not certain that these events and discourses followed one another in the order in which they are recorded, but it is evident from the



subject-matter that many of them belong to this latter part of the public ministry.

*Indissolubility of Marriage-Bond (M. 19; Mk. 10; L. 16)*

Some Pharisees put to Jesus the question, 'Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife (for any and every cause—M.)? Jesus replied,

Have ye not read that from the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female' and said, 'therefore shall a man leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but they are one flesh. What God then hath joined together let no man put asunder.

They said to him, 'Why then did Moses command "to give a bill of divorce and to put away"? ' Jesus replied,

Because of your stubbornness of heart Moses permitted you to put away your wives; but it was not so from the beginning. And I say to you, whosoever putteth away his wife (except for impurity [fornication]—M.) and marrieth another woman, he committeth adultery; and he that marrieth her that is put away committeth adultery. (And she, if she put away her husband and marry another, committeth adultery—Mk.)

Divorce was at that time commonly practised both by Jews and Gentiles. Even the disciples were astounded by Jesus' uncompromising reassertion of the indissolubility of the marriage-bond. They said to him, 'If such be the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry.' Jesus replied,

Not all take in this saying, but they to whom it hath been given. For there are eunuchs who were born so from their mother's womb, and eunuchs who were made such by men; and there are eunuchs who have made themselves such for

the sake of the kingdom of the heavens. He that can take this in, let him take it in.

Both Mark and Luke report Jesus as declaring the marriage-bond indissoluble, without any exception. Later Paul will write: 'To the married I give this charge, nay, not I but the Lord, that a wife depart not from her husband—but if she have departed, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband—and that a husband put not away his wife' (1 Cor. 7, 10). In short, separation between husband and wife might be allowed or even be necessary, but divorce never; even though husband and wife lived apart, the marriage-bond remained intact. And this was the Christian rule as explicitly taught by the writers of the first three centuries.

How then are we to understand Matthew's clause 'except for fornication'? It can perhaps be explained by the parallel passage in the Sermon on the Mount (Chap. 3: The New Law and the Old) which runs: 'I tell you that every man that putteth away his wife, save on account of fornication, maketh her to suffer [exposes her to] adultery; and whosoever marrieth her that is put away committeth adultery.' Indeed, the Codex Vaticanus gives this reading in Matthew 19, 9. Here there is a simple and obvious reason for the clause. Fornication on the part of a married person is adultery, and a husband cannot be said to make his wife an adulteress, if she is an adulteress already. But, for whatever reason a wife has been 'put away', anyone who attempts to marry her while her lawful spouse is living, only commits adultery.

When talking later with the disciples, who had expressed doubts whether men could observe so strict a law, Jesus admitted that only the grace of God made its observance possible: 'All men take not this word, but they to whom it is given.' Observance of the law would in fact in many cases oblige the married to live as though they were not married.



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But, said Jesus, there are many who, either by nature or by man's handiwork, are incapable of marriage, and there are others too who have renounced marriage altogether for the sake of the kingdom of God. 'He that can take this in, let him take it in.' Celibacy is not merely abstention from marriage, but abstention from marriage 'for the sake of the kingdom of God,' and as such it is here implicitly declared to be a higher and rarer vocation than marriage.

#### *Jesus Welcomes Little Children (M. 19 ; Mk. 10 ; L. 18)*

While Jesus was talking with his disciples, some mothers came with their children to obtain his blessing. The disciples were sending them off with a rebuke, but Jesus, perceiving it, was indignant and said,

Suffer the little children to come unto me, and hinder them not, for of such is the kingdom of God. Amen I say to you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God like a little child shall never enter it.

And he took them into his arms, and laying his hands upon them, blessed them. Jesus had previously given the disciples a child as their model (cf. Chap. 5: Talks with Disciples), and it was there explained in what sense Christ's disciple must resemble the child.

#### *The Rich Young Man (M. 19 ; Mk. 10 ; L. 18)*

As Jesus was about to resume his journey, a young nobleman came and knelt before him, saying, 'Good Master, what (good work—M.) am I to do to inherit (in order to have—M.) life everlasting?' Jesus said to him,

Why dost thou call me good? (Why askest thou me about the good?—M.) No one is good save God alone. But if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.

*In Judaea and Peraea*

He asked, 'Which?' Jesus replied,

'Thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness, honour thy father and thy mother' (and 'thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself'—M.).

'All these I have kept from my youth,' said the young man, 'wherein am I still lacking?' Jesus 'looked on him and loved him.' He said,

One thing is lacking (still wanting—L.) to thee. If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell all thou hast and give to the poor—and thou shalt have treasure in heaven—and come, follow me.

But at this, the young man's face fell, and he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. As he left them, Jesus said to his disciples,

With what difficulty shall (do—L.) they that have riches enter the kingdom of God! (Amen, I say to you, with difficulty shall a rich man enter the kingdom of the heavens—M.)

The disciples were astonished, but Jesus repeated,

Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.

With growing astonishment, they asked, 'And who then can be saved?' Jesus replied,

With men it is impossible, but not with God, for all things are possible with God. (Things impossible with men are possible with God—L.)

Peter then said, 'Behold, we have left all things and have followed thee. (What then are we to have?—M.)' Jesus said,

Amen, I say to you, ye who have followed me, at the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit upon the throne



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of his glory, ye too shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Amen, I say to you, no one hath left home, or brothers, or sisters, or mother, or father, or children, or lands, for my sake and for the sake of the gospel, but shall receive a hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and brothers, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands—together with persecutions—and in the world to come life everlasting (shall receive manifold and inherit life everlasting—M.). And many that are first shall be last, and many that are last shall be first.

The episode of the rich young man illustrates the distinction which Jesus made between the commandments and precepts which were of obligation for all believers and 'the counsels' which he offered only to those capable of 'following him' in the physical sense, i.e. joining the band of disciples which accompanied him always. But such 'following', as well as the preliminary discarding of earthly goods, was left to the person's free choice: 'if you wish to be perfect'.

In the *Book of Wisdom*, composed not earlier than the third century B.C., the inspired writer says that after death 'the just . . . shall judge nations and hold dominion over peoples, and the Lord shall reign over them for ever.' In Old Testament usage, to judge, the function of the ruler, and to hold dominion mean practically the same thing. Using the apocalyptic language then current, Jesus was probably saying, in answer to Peter's question, that the Apostles were destined to be the rulers of the New Israel, i.e. the Christian Church, under him.

#### *Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard (M. 20)*

Jesus goes on to illustrate his saying: 'Many that are first shall be last, and many that are last shall be first' by a parable.

### *In Judaea and Peraea*

For the kingdom of the heavens is like to a householder, who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard. And having agreed with the labourers upon one denarius a day, he sent them forth into his vineyard. And going out about the third hour, he saw others standing in the market-place idle, and he said to them, 'Go ye also into the vineyard, and I will give you whatsoever be just.' And they went. Going out again about the sixth and ninth hours, he did in like manner. And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing, and he saith to them, 'Why stand ye here all the day idle?' They say to him, 'Because no one hath hired us.' He saith to them, 'Go ye also into the vineyard.' And when evening was come, the lord of the vineyard saith to his steward, 'Call the labourers and pay them the wage, beginning with the last and ending with the first.' So those who were hired about the eleventh hour came and received a denarius each. And when the first to be hired were also come, they thought they would receive more; and they too received a denarius each. And upon receiving it, they murmured against the householder, saying, 'These last have worked but one hour, and thou hast made them equal to us, who have borne the burden of the day and the heat.' But he answered and said to one of them, 'Friend, I do thee no wrong. Didst thou not agree with me for one denarius? Take what is thine and go thy way; I mean to give to this last even as to thee. May I not do what I will with mine own? Or is thine eye envious because I am kind?' Even so shall the last be first, and the first be last.

The meaning of the parable is partly explained by its context. Jesus has just been speaking of the rewards awaiting those who had accepted his call. These are 'the last' called, the labourers of the eleventh hour; they are often typified by 'the publicans and the sinners'. On the other hand, 'the first' labourers are those who made exclusive claims on the



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basis of the Old Covenant and their life-long observance of the Law; they are typified by the Pharisees. It is not without significance perhaps that in the parable a definite contract is made with 'the first' labourers, whereas 'the last' are simply invited to come and work without any specific wage being mentioned. As in the parable of the Prodigal Son the elder brother resented his father's kindness to the prodigal, so here 'the first' labourers resent the master's kindness to 'the last', and his reply gives the moral of the story: 'May I not do what I will with my own? Or are you envious because I am kind?' Once again Jesus was emphasizing that 'eternal life' is primarily not something earned by man's own effort but a pure outpouring of God's loving bounty. In 'The Prodigal Son' all that mattered was to be in the Father's house; here all that matters is to be in the employ of the master of the vineyard. (Recall the parables of the Precious Pearl and the Hidden Treasure, and Jesus' saying about 'the least in the kingdom'.) The true servant of God will rejoice that more and more share his privilege, without considering whether later arrivals do not benefit more from God's mercy. Besides, God is so rich that he can afford to be bountiful to all, and none is the loser by what is given to others. But how do the last become first and the first last? Well, we see 'the first' labourers at odds with the master of the vineyard, and if they persist in their opposition to his plans, they will surely lose their employment, if that is not already implied. Only 'the last' will be employed in the vineyard. The application to the Pharisees on the one hand and the followers of Jesus on the other is obvious.

## CHAPTER 8

### THE LAST WEEKS

*A.D. 30. March. The Raising of Lazarus (J. 11)*

IT WAS APPARENTLY while he was still in Peraea that Jesus received a message from Bethany, near Jerusalem, simply saying, 'Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.' It had been sent by the two sisters, Martha and Mary, and referred to their brother Lazarus (cf. Chap. 7: Martha and Mary). On receiving it, Jesus observed,

This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby.

However, he made no move for two days. Then he said to his disciples,

Let us return unto Judaea.

The disciples said, 'Rabbi, the Jews but now were seeking to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?' Jesus replied,

Are there not twelve hours in the day [of daylight]? If a man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because the light is not in him.

A man does not stumble so long as he walks in daylight. But the phrase 'walking by the light', as used by Jesus, meant doing the will of God as perceived. It was his Father's will that he should now return to Judaea. He went on to say,

Lazarus our friend sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him.

Taking these words literally, the disciples found the proposal strange, but Jesus explained to them,



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Lazarus is dead; and for your sake I rejoice that I was not there, that ye may believe. But let us go to him.

So they returned once more to the vicinity of Jerusalem, and news of Jesus' coming preceded him. Martha, hearing it, went along the road to meet him. 'Lord,' she said to him, 'Hadst thou been here, my brother had not died.' Jesus said to her.

Thy brother shall rise again.

She said, 'I know that he shall rise again at the resurrection, on the last day.' Jesus said,

I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, even if he die, shall live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, he shall never die. Believest thou this?

She said, 'Yea, Lord, I have believed that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, that cometh into the world.' Martha then hurried on ahead to tell her sister Mary, 'The Master is here and calleth thee.' So Mary too went to meet Jesus, and she fell at his feet, saying like her sister, 'Lord, hadst thou been here, my brother had not died.' Meanwhile, sorrowing friends of the family had also gathered, and moved by all this grief Jesus 'groaned in the spirit and troubled himself,' i.e. he sighed deeply and was distressed. He asked,

Where have ye laid him?

They said, 'Lord, come and see.' And as he went with them, Jesus wept. This manifestation of human feeling, in sympathy with his friends' sorrow, is a precious indication of Jesus' true humanity, 'Behold how he loved him,' remarked the on-lookers, but some said, 'Could he not have prevented his dying?' Lazarus' tomb was a cave, with a large stone as a door. Jesus again sighed deeply as he approached. Then he said,

Take away the stone.

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Martha, despite her recent profession of faith, expostulated, but Jesus said,

Did I not say to thee that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?

'Glory of God' means a manifestation of Divine power. So the stone was removed. And Jesus, raising his eyes heavenward, said,

Father, I give thee thanks that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou dost always hear me, but because of the multitude which standeth around have I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.

Then, Jesus, in a loud voice, cried out,

Lazarus, come forth.

And he that had been dead came forth, still muffled in his cerements. Jesus said to his friends,

Loose him, and let him go.

### *Sequel to the Miracle (J. 11)*

Many of those present at the raising of Lazarus found faith in Jesus, but others hurried off to report the matter to the Jewish authorities. A special meeting of the latter was called to consider what action should be taken. 'If we allow this to go on,' they said, 'we shall get involved in trouble with the Romans,' on the supposition apparently that Jesus would eventually cause a public disturbance. Caiaphas, the high priest, then gave the fatal counsel, 'It is expedient that one man should die for the sake of the people, to save the whole nation from destruction.' Without knowing it, says the evangelist, he was uttering a prophecy: Jesus would indeed die for the nation, 'and not for the nation only, but that he



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might gather together into one the scattered children of God.' So Jesus' death was decided upon, and all that remained to discuss was how to bring it about. But 'the hour' had not yet come, and Jesus retired with his disciples to Ephraim, a town a few miles to the north, on the borders of the desert, and there awaited the coming Passover.

*A.D. 30. March. Final Journey to Jerusalem (M. 20; Mk. 10; L. 18)*

Two weeks or so before the Passover, Jesus left Ephraim and set out on his last journey to Jerusalem, taking the longer route via Jericho, which was the junction of the pilgrim routes from Galilee and Peraea. Mark tells us that Jesus went resolutely ahead and that the disciples followed, bewildered and rather frightened. Then, taking the Twelve apart, Jesus told them, in greater detail than in his former predictions, what was about to take place.

Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written through the prophets shall be fulfilled unto the Son of Man. For he shall be delivered to the high priests and the scribes. And they shall condemn him to death and shall deliver him up to the gentiles, and they shall mock him, and spit upon him, and scourge him. And after they have scourged him, they shall put him to death (crucify him—M.); and on the third day he shall rise again.

Even so explicit a statement was not understood by the disciples, so far removed was such a destiny from their conception of the Messiah.

*James and John make a Request (M. 20; Mk. 10)*

So firmly was the idea of a final triumph, in the worldly sense, fixed in their minds, that James and John decided to

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profit by the exceptional favour which Jesus had manifested towards them, along with Peter. According to Mark, they came to Jesus and asked him to promise in advance to grant the petition they were about to make, and Jesus replied,

What would ye have me do for you?

According to Matthew, it was their mother who first approached Jesus, who said to her,

What wilt thou?

The petition was that James and John should sit on Jesus' right hand and on his left hand in the coming kingdom, i.e. that they should hold the highest offices in the kingdom. Jesus said to the two brothers,

Ye know not for what ye ask. Can ye drink of the cup whereof I am about to drink, or be baptized with the baptism wherewith I am to be baptized?

Jesus here envisaged his Passion as a bitter draught which he had to drink, and as deep waters into which he was to be plunged. But they answered confidently, 'We can.' Jesus had a great affection for these 'sons of thunder', as he showed by the gentleness of his reply,

Of the cup whereof I am to drink, ye shall drink, and with the baptism wherewith I am to be baptized, ye shall be baptized; but to sit on my right hand or on my left is not mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared by my Father.

This episode became known to the other disciples, and they were indignant with the brothers. But Jesus called them all together, and said to them,

Ye know that they that pass as rulers of the gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones domineer over them. But



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with you it is not so. Nay, whosoever would become great among you shall be your servant; and whosoever would be first among you shall be the slave of all—even as the Son of Man hath come not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.

#### *The Blind Men of Jericho (M. 20; Mk. 10; L. 18)*

As Jesus approached Jericho—for Luke's account is perhaps more exact on this point—a blind beggar named Bartimaeus, who was seated by the wayside begging, heard a crowd passing and asked what it meant. He was told, 'Jesus the Nazarene is passing by.' He then began to cry out, 'Jesus, Son of David, have pity on me.' The crowd sharply bade him be silent, but he only cried the louder. Jesus heard and stopping, said,

Call him.

Whereupon they said to him, 'Be of good heart, arise, he calleth thee.' And casting off his cloak, he leaped up and came to Jesus, who asked him,

What wilt thou that I do for thee?

'Lord', he said, 'that I may see.' And Jesus was moved with compassion and said,

Receive thy sight; go, thy faith hath healed thee.

And at once he was able to see, and he followed Jesus, glorifying God. Matthew tells us that there were two blind men, and that Jesus 'touched their eyes, and straightway they saw.'

#### *Zacchaeus the Publican (L. 19)*

So Jesus entered Jericho accompanied by a crowd. Now a wealthy and leading publican named Zacchaeus was eager to

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get a sight of the much-talked-of prophet, but being short of stature he could not see over the heads of the people. He therefore ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-tree, and waited there for Jesus to pass. But when Jesus reached the tree, he stopped, and, looking up, said,

Zacchaeus, make haste to come down; for to-day I must abide in thy house.

Hastily descending, Zacchaeus received him with joy. But the crowd began audibly to criticise Jesus' choice of host—'a man who is a sinner', i.e. a publican. But Zacchaeus knew what such a favour demanded of him. 'Behold, Lord,' he said to Jesus, 'here and now I give half of what I have to the poor, and if I have falsely accused any one [i.e. extorted more than was due from them] I give back fourfold.' Jesus said,

To-day salvation hath come to this house, for he too is a son of Abraham; for the Son of Man hath come to seek and to save what was lost.

#### *Parable of the Minas (L. 19)*

While seated in the house of Zacchaeus probably, Jesus spoke a parable, intended to correct the prevalent idea 'that the kingdom of God was about to appear forthwith.' The 'mina' in the parable was equal to one hundred drachmas. Jesus said,

A certain man of noble birth went forth into a far country to obtain for himself a kingship and so return. And having summoned ten of his servants he gave them ten minas and said unto them, 'Trade till I come.' But his citizens hated him; and they sent an embassy after him to say, 'We wish not that this man reign over us.' And it came to pass that when he returned after obtaining the kingship, he bade those servants be called unto him to whom he had given the money, in order



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that he might learn what trading each had done. The first came and said, 'Lord, thy mina hath earned ten minas.' And he said to him, 'Well done, thou good servant; because thou hast proved faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.' And the second came and said, 'Thy mina, lord, hath made five minas.' He said to him likewise, 'Be thou also over five cities.' And another came and said, 'Lord, behold thy mina, which I have kept laid up in a napkin: for I feared thee, because thou art an exacting man: thou takest up what thou hast not laid down and thou reapest what thou hast not sown.' He saith to him, 'Out of thy mouth I judge thee, thou wicked servant! Knewest thou that I am an exacting man; taking up what I have not laid down, and reaping what I have not sown? Then why didst thou not give my money into a bank, so that I at my coming might have drawn it out along with the interest?' And he said to the bystanders, 'Take ye the mina from him, and give it to him that hath the ten minas.' And they said to him, 'Lord, he hath already ten minas.' [He replied] 'I say to you, to everyone that hath shall be given, but from him that hath not, even what he hath shall be taken. But as for these mine enemies who would not have me reign over them—bring them hither and slaughter them before me.'

The materials of this story were taken partly from ordinary political happenings of the time—perhaps from the actual history of Archelaus, the former ruler of the people Jesus was addressing—and partly from the language of commerce, familiar to the publicans present. The nobleman in the story represented Jesus himself, who would shortly be going away, leaving his interests in the charge of his disciples; only later would he return in the majesty of his kingship to reward his faithful servants and punish his enemies. His servants would then have to account for their use of what had been entrusted to them, and they would be rewarded in proportion to the

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fruits obtained by each, the rewards, incidentally, being vastly in excess of the services rendered. Failure, whether from sloth or from diffidence, to make any profitable use of the goods entrusted to them would involve the loss of all. From this as from previous parables, we may gather that the initial summons to God's service is a pure grace from God, but here we are also taught that by the use he makes of this and other graces, man gains more or less merit, and that this will be taken into account in his final reward (cf. Chap. 8: The Parable of the Talents).

#### *Jesus at Bethany (J. 12; M. 26; Mk. 14)*

Jericho, in the Jordan valley, lies about 900 feet below sea level; Jerusalem, twenty-three miles away, is over 2,300 feet above the sea. So the road from Jericho to Jerusalem is quite a climb, and to this day it is rendered dangerous by brigands, as it was when Jesus made it the scene of the Good Samaritan's deed of charity. Jesus and his disciples traversed this road on his last journey to Jerusalem, but, according to John, stopped short of the city, at the village of Bethany. They probably arrived on the evening of the Friday and spent the Sabbath there. On the Saturday evening, according to John—Matthew and Mark put it later—'they made him a supper there, and Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining at table with him.' Lazarus then was not the host, and Matthew and Mark tell us that this was 'Simon the leper', perhaps one whom Jesus had cured (St. Jerome). While they were at table, 'there came a woman with an alabaster jar of ointment—genuine nard of great value; and she brake the jar and poured it over his head' (M. and Mk.). John tells us her name, Mary, the sister of Lazarus and Martha, and says that she 'anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with



her hair; and the house was filled with the scent of the ointment' (cf. Chap. 4: The Sinful Woman).

Mary's action irritated Judas, who remarked to his neighbours, 'Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred drachmas and the money given to the poor?' (cf. Philip's remark at the Feeding of the Five Thousand, Chap. 4). John tells us that Judas was not really concerned about the poor, but 'having the purse, he used to take [for himself] what was put therein.' And Matthew and Mark both connect this episode with Judas' final decision to betray Jesus.

Jesus knew what was being whispered, and for the second, if not the third, time, defended Mary. He said,

Let her be; why do ye trouble her? She hath wrought a good work upon me. For the poor ye have with you always, and whensoever ye will ye can do good to them; but me ye have not always. For she in pouring this ointment over my body hath done it for my burial. (What she could, she hath done; she hath anointed my body beforehand for burial—Mk.; Let her alone, that she keep it for the day of my burial—J.) Amen, I say to you, wheresoever this gospel is preached throughout the world, that also which she hath done shall be told for a memorial of her.

Unlikely as it must have seemed at the time, Jesus' prophecy has been exactly fulfilled, and, in the words of St. John Chrysostom, 'while so many great queens and illustrious women of the past are now forgotten, this humble woman is celebrated—and always will be celebrated—throughout the entire world.'

*Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem (J. 12; M. 21; Mk. 11; L. 19)*

News of Jesus' arrival at Bethany had reached Jerusalem, and many had gone there, hoping also to see Lazarus, the man

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who had died and been brought back to life. On the Sunday morning when Jesus set out for the city, John tells us that crowds were on the road awaiting him, and they broke off branches from the palm trees and waved them, shouting 'Hosanna! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, the king of Israel!' It may have been because progress was difficult under these conditions that Jesus said to his disciples,

Go ye into the village which is over against you, and straightway upon entering it, ye shall find a colt tethered, whereon no man hath yet sat (an ass tethered, and a colt with her—M.) loose it (them—M.) and bring it (them to me—M.) And if anyone say to you, 'Why do ye this?' say ye, 'The Lord hath need of it (them—M.), and will straightway send it (them—M.) back hither.'

An alternative translation for the last line is 'and straightway he will let them go.'

So it was done, and Jesus mounted the colt and resumed his journey, which now became a triumphal procession, the people shouting Hosannas and waving their palms, while others spread their garments on the road for Jesus to ride over. After the Resurrection the disciples would recall the prophecy of Zacharias which said, 'Fear not, daughter of Sion; behold, thy king cometh, sitting upon the colt of an ass,' and realize that this entry into Jerusalem had been its fulfilment. At the time, however, some Pharisees among the crowd protested to Jesus, urging him to stop the shouting. He replied,

I say to you, if these hold their peace, the very stones shall cry out.

When at length Jesus came within sight of Jerusalem, he shed tears and said,



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If upon this day thou too hadst known the things that are for thy peace! But now they are hidden from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee when thine enemies shall raise up a rampart against thee, and they shall compass thee round and hem thee in on every side; and they shall dash thee to the ground, and thy children within thee, and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone, because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation.

When this shouting, excited crowd entered Jerusalem, 'the whole city was moved,' and everyone was asking, 'Who is this?' Pilgrims had come from all parts of the world for the Passover, and they were naturally surprised and curious. They were told, 'This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee.' Meanwhile, Jesus made his way to the Temple, and blind and lame came to him there and he healed them. But children were still about him crying 'Hosanna to the son of David,' and the Temple authorities said indignantly to Jesus, 'Hearest thou what these are saying?' Jesus replied,

Yea; have ye never read, 'Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast brought forth perfect praise?' [Ps. 8.]

Then, as it was already late, Jesus after looking round upon everything left the Temple and the city, and returned to Bethany with the Twelve.

#### *The Barren Fig-Tree (M. 21; Mk. 11; L. 17)*

Commentators, and even the evangelists themselves, are not in complete accord as to the precise days on which occurred the various happenings that took place at Jerusalem between the triumphal entry and the Last Supper. We are told that Jesus came each day to the Temple and taught there, and that he passed the night outside the city, either at Bethany or on the Mount of Olives (probably at Gethsemane).

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It would seem, however, to have been early on the Monday that on his way to the city Jesus felt hungry and went up to a fig-tree to see if it had any fruit. But, as Mark notes, it was not the time for figs; Jesus found only leaves. He then said,

Never more may any man eat fruit of thee.

On the following morning, when they passed the same tree they saw that it was now withered from the roots. Peter called Jesus' attention to the result of his words, and Jesus said to them,

Amen I say to you, if ye have faith and doubt not, not only shall ye do what I have done to the fig-tree, but if ye say to this mountain, 'Be thou lifted up and cast into the sea', it shall be done. And what things soever ye ask for in prayer with faith, ye shall receive (M.). (Have faith in God. Amen I say to you, whosoever saith to this mountain, 'Be thou lifted up and cast into the sea', and doubteth not in his heart, but believeth that what he saith is to come to pass, it shall be done for him. Wherefore I say to you, whatsoever things ye ask for in prayer, believe that ye have received them, and they shall come unto you—Mk.)

Luke, who does not record the above episode, gives on the other hand the parable of the barren fig-tree (cf. Chap. 7: Parable of Barren Fig-Tree) and also records another saying of Jesus, in reply to the disciples request, 'Increase our faith':

If ye have faith even as a grain of mustard-seed, you would say to this mulberry, 'Be uprooted and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you.

The episode of the barren fig-tree was a parable in action, and may have been intended to teach the disciples that external professions, such as they had witnessed the previous day, were insufficient unless accompanied by sincere accept-



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ance of God's messenger and obedience to his message. It was Israel that was really the tree which gave leaves but no fruit. Judaism, despite its apparent vitality, had proved sterile and so was about to fall under God's curse. A lesson that has also been drawn from this episode is that God sometimes demands the seemingly impossible from his servants, but must nevertheless be obeyed.

#### *In the Temple (M. 21 ; Mk. 11 ; L. 19)*

Matthew, Mark and Luke put the cleansing of the Temple either immediately after the triumphal entry or on the following day. We have followed John in assigning it to Jesus' visit to Jerusalem at the opening of his public life (cf. Chap. 2: First Passover), but some commentators think it was repeated here. In the latter case, it would add significance to the question now put to Jesus by some of 'the high priests and the scribes and the elders,' who demanded, 'By what authority dost thou these things?' Jesus replied,

I also will ask you one question ; and if ye answer it for me,  
I in turn will tell you by what authority I do these things.  
The baptism of John—whence was it? Of heaven or of men?  
Answer me.

They reasoned among themselves, saying, 'If we say, "of heaven", he will say, "Why then did ye not believe him?" But are we to say, "of men"?'—they feared the crowd, which held John to have been a true prophet. So they replied; 'We know not.' Jesus said,

Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.

#### *Parable of the Two Sons (M. 21)*

But what think ye? A man had two sons. He came to the first and said, 'My son, go and work in the vineyard to-day.'

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But he answered and said, 'I will not'; yet afterwards he repented and went. And he came to the second and spoke in like manner. And he answered and said, 'I go, sir'; and he went not. Which of the two did their father's will?

They said, 'The first.' Jesus said to them,

Amen, I say to you, the publicans and the harlots are entering the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of justness and ye believed him not; but the publicans and harlots believed him; and yourselves, beholding it, did not even repent afterwards, so as to believe him.

The moral is clear: the sinner who is converted and tries to follow God's will is preferable to the man who makes an outward profession of religion but does not really follow God's will. As Luke had noted earlier, 'the common people who had listened to John, and the publicans, had done justice to God [i.e. to his merciful intentions in their regard] by being baptized with the baptism of John, whereas the Pharisees and the doctors of the law, by refusing John's baptism, had frustrated God's plan for them' (cf. Chap. 4: John the Baptist's Question). 'John came unto you in the way of justness' means that he had followed traditional methods, and could not (like Jesus) be described as an innovator. And yet the Pharisees had not believed him. Jesus continued,

#### *Parable of the Wicked Vine-Dressers (M. 21; Mk. 12; L. 20)*

Hear ye another parable. There was once a householder who planted a vineyard, and fenced it round, and dug a winepress therein and built a tower; and he let it out to husbandmen [vine-dressers] and went abroad (for a long while—L.). And when the time for the fruits drew near, he sent a servant unto the husbandmen to receive of the fruits of the vineyard. And they laid hold of him, and beat him, and sent



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him back empty. And again he sent to them another servant, and him they wounded in the head and shamefully ill-treated, and sent him back empty. And he sent another, and him they slew, and many besides, beating some and slaying others. So the lord of the vineyard said, 'What am I to do? I will send my beloved son; him, maybe, they will reverence.' But when the vine-dressers saw him, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may become ours.' And laying hold of him they cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. What then will the lord of the vineyard do to them? He will come and destroy these husbandmen, and give the vineyard to others.

Whereat his hearers cried, 'God forbid.' For the meaning of this parable was only too clear. Alike in the Psalms and in the prophecies of Ezechiel and Osee, Israel was depicted as God's vine, and the vine-dressers were of course the leaders of Israel, to whom the parable was addressed. Clearly too the unique character and mission of Jesus was here set before them. The prophets of Israel had been God's servants; he was the well-beloved Son. 'They will surely reverence my son,' the Father had said, but how different the reality. 'Come, let us kill him'—that was what the Jewish leaders were actually saying. This word of the father in the parable, 'They will reverence my son,' suggests what even the Gospels, wonderful as they are, can only partially convey, namely the manifest holiness of Jesus Christ, as presented to his contemporaries, the loftiness and at the same time the attractiveness of his personality, and the supernatural authority that infused all his words and actions. It was because Jesus was so manifestly worthy of reverence and trust that the Pharisees and others were so much to blame for failing to acknowledge and believe in him. This parable was a supreme appeal to the conscience of Christ's enemies, showing in all its malice the

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wickedness of their plot against him, and warning them of its frightful consequences for themselves and for their race. But the appeal was in vain. Jesus went on to say,

Have you never read in the scriptures: 'The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the corner-stone. This is the Lord's doing, and it is wonderful in our eyes'? Wherefore I say to you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and shall be given to a nation that yieldeth the fruits thereof. And he that falleth upon this stone shall be broken to pieces; and upon whomsoever it fall, it shall crush him.

Jesus then, according to Matthew, enforced this saying by a parable, or rather two parables in one.

#### *Parables of the Marriage Feast and the Wedding Garment (M. 22)*

The kingdom of the heavens is like to a king who made a marriage-feast for his son. And he sent forth his servants to summon to the wedding those invited; and they would not come. Again he sent forth other servants, saying, 'Say ye to those invited, Behold I have prepared my dinner: my beeves and fatlings are killed and all things are ready: come ye to the wedding.' But they heeded not and went their ways, one to his field, another to his business; while the rest laid hold of his servants and outraged and slew them. And the king was angry, and sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. Then he saith to his servants, 'The marriage-feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go ye therefore to the crossings of the streets, and whomsoever ye find, summon to the wedding.' And those servants went forth into the streets and gathered together all whom they found, both the bad and the good; and the bridal-hall was filled with guests.

And the king went in to see the guests, and saw there a man who wore no wedding-garment; and he saith to him,



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'Friend, how camest thou in hither without a wedding-garment?' But he was dumbfounded. Then said the king to the servants, 'Bind ye his hands and feet, and cast him forth into the outer darkness; there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.' For many are called, but few are chosen.

The first part of the parable resembles that of the Great Supper (cf. Chap. 7: Parable of the Great Supper) and some commentators think that they are two versions of one and the same discourse. On the other hand, the above parable comes very appropriately here, as illustrating the consequences of the Jewish leaders' rejection of Christ. As in the preceding parable, there is the emphasis on Jesus' Sonship, the repeated sending of messengers, the evil fate which befell those who did not heed the call, and their supersession by others.

The second part is really a separate parable. Its lesson is that not only must one be ready to accept God's call when it comes, but one must fulfil the conditions imposed by the nature of the call, namely repentance and amendment of life. 'You are to put on the new man, who is created according to God in justice and holiness of truth,' says St. Paul (Eph. 4, 24). And again, 'all you who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ' (Gal. 3, 27).

The conclusion: 'Many are called but few are chosen' has been variously interpreted, but, as summing up the parable, it seems plainly to refer to 'the many' who had been invited to join Our Lord and 'the few' who had actually done so. Thus Prat, Durand, Pope and the Westminster Version.

The Jewish leaders went away, hardened in their resolve to destroy Jesus, but fearful of the people who looked on him as a prophet and were eager to hear him.

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### *Jesus Speaks of his Passion (J. 12)*

John records some words of Jesus, addressed to his disciples, which we may place here, as they are connected with what he had just been saying to the Jewish leaders,

The hour is come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Amen, amen, I say to you, unless the grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, itself remaineth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life doth lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto everlasting life. If any one serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there also shall my servant be. If any one serve me, the Father will honour him. Now my soul is troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. Nay, for this came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name.

‘There came therefore a voice out of heaven, “I have already glorified it, and I will glorify it again.”’ Some of the bystanders only heard what seemed to be thunder; others said, ‘An angel hath spoken to him.’ Jesus then said,

Not for my sake came this voice, but for yours. Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the ruler of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.

Some of the people said to him, ‘We have heard out of the Law that the Christ abideth for ever, and how sayest thou, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up’? Who is this Son of Man?’ Jesus replied,

Yet a little while the light is among you. Walk whilst ye have the light, that the darkness overtake you not; and he that walketh in the darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. Whilst ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may become sons of light.

And he then withdrew from them.



*Question about the Tribute (M. 22; Mk. 12; L. 20)*

Some Pharisees and Herodians had found a way, as they thought, of embroiling Jesus either with the people or with the Roman authorities, especially the latter. They came, pretending to be his admirers, and asked, 'Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not?' Jesus saw through the pretence, and said,

Why do ye tempt me, ye hypocrites? Show me the coin of the tribute. (Bring me a denarius and let me see it—Mk.)

They handed him a silver *denarius*. Jesus then asked,

Whose is this image and inscription? (Whose image and inscription doth it bear?—L.)

They replied, 'Caesar's'. Then Jesus said,

Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.

Even his enemies were in admiration at Jesus' easy escape from the trap set for him. But his reply contained a profound truth. Man has been created in God's image and thus bears in himself the stamp of his Creator and Lord. If then he is to give God what is God's, he must give himself, to live wholly according to God's will. Caesar and God do not necessarily represent two distinct spheres of duty, for our duty to God covers and includes every other duty. Jesus was as little concerned with current political disputes as with disputes about property (cf. Chap. 7: Parable of the Rich Fool). His concern was the more vital issue of man's relations with God. Nevertheless, his reply to the Pharisees has proved a useful principle in the solution of disputes arising between Church and State, and between conscience and public duty.

Some Sadducees now put to Jesus another question.

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### *On Resurrection and the After-life (M. 22 ; Mk. 12 ; L 20)*

The Sadducees, like the Samaritans, acknowledged only the Books of Moses, the Pentateuch, as Divinely authoritative, which explains why Jesus answered them by a text from 'The Book of Moses'. The Pentateuch taught that man survives death, for Jacob says, 'I shall go down to my son mourning, to Sheol' (Gen. 37, 35). Sheol was the name given to the abode of the departed, which was supposed to lie deep under the earth. But it is not clear what part of man the ancient Israelites thought of as surviving. 'It may safely be said that they did not know of the spirituality of the human soul, and in the absence of clear knowledge about the nature of man they do not appear to have raised the question in precisely what manner man does survive. Their ideas about the conditions in which man survived in Sheol were almost entirely negative. It was vividly realized that departure from this world to Sheol meant the loss of all the activity characteristic of living man' (Sutcliffe, *The Old Testament and the Future Life*). According to the same author, the earliest teaching of the resurrection in Holy Scripture occurs in the Book of Daniel: 'Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall arise, some to life everlasting and some to reproaches, to everlasting abhorrence' (12, 2). Belief in a resurrection to a new 'life' is clearly expressed in chapters 7 and 12 of the Second Book of Machabees (second century B.C.). Now whatever the Sadducees may have believed about the hereafter, they did not believe in a future 'life' which supposed the resurrection of the body. But, as controversialists often do, they misrepresented their opponents' views, by assuming that the risen life would be merely a reproduction of the present life. So they asked Jesus what would be the position in this new existence of a woman who had lived



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successively with several husbands while on earth: 'In the resurrection whose wife will she be?' Jesus replied,

Ye err, knowing not the scriptures, neither the power of God. The children of this world marry and are given in marriage, but they that have been counted worthy of attaining to that world and to the resurrection from the dead are neither to marry nor to be given in marriage, for neither can they die any more; they are as the angels, and are children of God, being children of the resurrection.

And, as for the dead—that they indeed rise—have ye not read in the Book of Moses, at the Bush, how God spoke to him saying, 'I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob'? He is not the God of dead men but of living, for all live to him. Greatly do ye err.

The Sadducees had not realized 'the power of God' to transform earthly conditions of life into heavenly. In heaven all that was spiritual and holy in human relations would endure, while all that was merely carnal would have disappeared. They were wrong, too, in denying the resurrection of the body, because the blessed in heaven were to enjoy the fullest life, and that could not be unless their bodies shared in it. St. Thomas Aquinas noted (Suppl. q. 77, art. 1, ad. 2) that at the time Our Lord spoke the Patriarchs were in fact dead (i.e. their souls were separated from their bodies), but, as God is the God of the living, they could not remain in the state of death and their souls and bodies must be reunited.

#### *The Most Important Commandment (M. 22; Mk. 12)*

One of the scribes present said to Jesus, 'Master, thou hast spoken well. What is the first commandment of all?' Jesus replied,

The first is: 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole

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heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind, and with thy whole strength.' This is the great and first commandment. The second is like thereto: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' No other commandment is greater than these. Upon these two commandments the whole Law hangeth, and the prophets.

The second commandment is like the first because it is concerned with the same love. He who loves God will love only what God loves, both in himself and in others. The scribe agreed that the observance of these two commandments was 'far more than all the holocausts and sacrifices,' and Jesus, seeing that he had answered wisely, said to him,

Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.

*How is the Messiah 'David's Lord'? (M. 22; Mk. 12; L. 20)*

None dared to put any further question to Jesus, but he now put a question to them:

What think ye about the Christ? Whose son is he?

They replied, 'David's.' Jesus continued,

How then doth David in spirit (in the Holy Spirit—Mk.), call him 'Lord', saying, 'The Lord [Jehovah] said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand until I put thine enemies beneath thy feet.' If David, then, calleth him 'Lord', how is he his son?

The psalm quoted by Jesus is called 'a psalm of David', and so it is David who there speaks of 'my Lord' who is to sit at the right hand of Jehovah. Thus from their sacred Scriptures, Jesus demonstrated to the Pharisees that the Messiah was to be not only David's son but at the same time a greater than David, one whom David himself would regard as his Lord. This superhuman, this divine aspect of Jesus the



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Messiah was expressed by the title 'the Son of God'. That this title was applicable to Jesus had been implied in his constant reference to 'my Father', and explicitly declared to the disciples when he said, 'All things are delivered to me by my Father: and no one knows who the Son is, except the Father: and who the Father is, except the Son, and he to whom the Son may choose to reveal him' (Chap. 7: Return of the Disciples). In his later discourses and parables Jesus had made public reference to his Divine 'Sonship', and this had more than once led to the charge of blasphemy. All this was known to the Pharisees, and so the answer which Jesus' question demanded of them was that the Messiah must be not only a son of David but also the Son of God, and on that account David's Lord. This, however, none of them dared admit.

#### *Denunciation of Scribes and Pharisees (M. 23; Mk. 12; L. 11 and 20)*

Jesus then warned his disciples, in the hearing of the people, to beware of the scribes and Pharisees. Matthew apparently gathers into a single discourse various utterances by Jesus denouncing the religious leaders of Israel. Luke reports parts of this discourse as having been said on earlier occasions, and this may have been the case with other portions.

Upon the chair of Moses have sitten the scribes and the Pharisees. All things therefore whatsoever they command you, observe and do; but according to their works do ye not—for they say and they do not. They bind up heavy burdens and lay them upon men's shoulders, but themselves will not move them with their finger [stir a finger to lift them].

And all their works they do in order to be seen by men. (They love to walk about in long robes and) they widen their phylacteries and enlarge their tassels; they love the first

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couch at suppers and the first seats in the synagogues and the salutations in the market-places, and to be called by men 'Rabbi'. (Who devour the houses of widows and make pretence of long prayers. These shall receive a heavier judgment—L.) Be not ye called 'Rabbi', for one is your master, and all ye are brethren. And call ye father no man upon earth, for one only is your father who is in heaven. Neither be ye called leaders [doctors, teachers] for one only is your leader, the Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. He that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because ye shut the kingdom of the heavens in the faces of men. Yourselves enter not, neither suffer ye those entering to pass in (Woe to you lawyers, because ye have taken away the key of knowledge; yourselves have not entered and those entering ye have hindered—L.).

Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because ye compass sea and land to gain a single proselyte, and when he is gained, ye make of him a son of hell [Gehenna] twofold more than yourselves.

Woe to you, ye blind guides, who say, 'If a man swear by the temple, it is naught [i.e. there is no obligation]; but if he swear by the gold of the temple, he is bound [by his oath]. Blind fools! Which is the greater, the gold, or the temple that hath hallowed the gold? And again, 'If a man swear by the altar, it is naught; but if he swear by the gift that is on it, he is bound.' Ye blind, which then is greater, the gift, or the altar that halloweth the gift? He therefore that sweareth by the altar, doth swear both by that and by all things thereon. And he that sweareth by the temple, doth swear both by that and by him who dwelleth therein. And he that sweareth by heaven, doth swear by the throne of God and by him who is seated thereon.

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because



ye tithe mint and dill and cummin (mint and rue and every vegetable—L.), and ye have neglected the weightier things of the Law—justice and mercy and faith (disregard justice and the love of God—L.). These things it behoved you to do, nor yet to neglect those others. Blind guides, who strain out the gnat but swallow the camel!

Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because ye clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Blind Pharisee! Clean first the inside of the cup and the dish, that their exterior too may be clean.

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which appear beautiful without, but within are full of dead bones and of all uncleanness. So ye also appear to men just without, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity (Ye are like hidden tombs over which men walk unawares—L.).

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because ye build the sepulchres of the prophets and adorn the tombs of the just, and ye say, 'Had we lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been their partners in shedding the blood of the prophets'; so that ye bear witness against yourselves that ye are sons of those who slew the prophets (Ye build the tombs of the prophets, and your fathers slew them. So then ye are witness to the works of your fathers and consent thereto, for whereas they killed the prophets, yourselves build their tombs—L.). Fill ye up yourselves the measure of your fathers! Ye serpents, brood of vipers, how are ye to flee from the judgment of hell [Gehenna]? Wherefore, behold, I send forth unto you prophets and wise men and scribes; some ye shall slay and crucify, and some ye shall scourge in your synagogues and hunt from city to city, that upon you there may come all the just blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of Abel the just unto the blood of Zachariah, son of Barachiah, whom ye slew between the

sanctuary and the altar. Amen, I say to you, all these things shall come upon this generation.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that slayest the prophets and stonest those who are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered together thy children, as a hen gathereth together her nestlings under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, 'your house is left to you desolate' [Jerem. 22, 5]. For I say to you, ye shall not see me henceforth until ye say, 'Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord' [Ps. 117].

The scribes were the official exponents of the Mosaic Law, and the Pharisees were the dominant religious party among the Jews; they were closely associated. Owing to their power and influence, it was they who were chiefly responsible for the Jewish failure to recognize Jesus Christ; they had been his chief opponents, and they were plotting with the chief priests to put him to death. These Jewish leaders may be described in Our Lord's language as 'salt which had lost its savour'. Ostensibly the most religious of the Jews, they lacked in fact the true spirit of religion. Hence their spiritual blindness! Hence too, a great deal of hypocrisy! The religious spirit, as Jesus taught, consists essentially of a sense of dependence upon God and of one's own unworthiness, gratitude and love towards our Father in heaven, humility, meekness and mercy in one's dealings with one's fellow-men. Instead, the Pharisaic spirit was marked by pride and self-sufficiency; the religion they taught was one of outward observance, and these observances they had multiplied until they had become an intolerable burden. Jesus distinguished between the Mosaic Law in itself—which was to be obeyed—and its interpretation by the scribes and Pharisees. He stigmatizes the inhumanity of the latter, their vanity and self-seeking, their obscurantism and false zeal, their ridiculous formalism, and at the same time the casuistry by which they themselves



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evaded the burdens they placed on others. In scathing terms, he described their religious attitudinizing, their exaggerated display of religious emblems—'phylacteries' were small scrolls containing passages from the Law worn on the forehead and the left arm—their standing in public places apparently engaged in prayer, when they were probably thinking how they might rob some widow. He called them 'whited sepulchres'—there were rows of sepulchres on the slopes of Olivet, whitened so that passers-by could more easily escape defilement by contact. He told them that they were true sons of the men who had killed the prophets, and that they would 'fill up the measure' of their fathers, i.e. by killing the Christ and persecuting his followers.

At the root of Pharisaism lay a false conception of righteousness, as something acquired by man for himself by being or becoming an Israelite and by the material observance of the Mosaic Law, as elaborated by the scribes. Later, the main efforts of St. Paul will be directed against this false conception of righteousness or exterior justice, to which he will oppose the righteousness which is God's free gift to all, whether Jew or Gentile, who accept and follow Jesus Christ.

In the final paragraph, 'your house is left to you' means 'abandoned by God', and most critics understand the sentence which follows to refer to the Second Coming.

#### *Jesus on his Mission (J. 12)*

The fourth Gospel completes, as it were, the above discourse, reported by Matthew, with a final public statement by Jesus on his own mission:

He that believeth in me doth not believe in me, but in him who sent me; and he that beholdeth me, beholdeth him who sent me. I am come as light into the world, that

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whoso believeth in me may not abide in darkness. And if any one hears my words, and keep them not, it is not I who judge him; for I have not come to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath his judge; the word which I have spoken, that shall judge him on the last day. For I have not spoken from myself; but the Father who sent me, he it is who gave me command what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting. What therefore I speak, even as the Father hath said unto me, so I speak.

#### *The Widow's Mite (Mk. 12; L. 21)*

Tired perhaps by preaching, Jesus sat down to rest. Nearby, the people were pushing their offerings of money through the openings made for the purpose in the walls of the treasury. Many rich people were putting in large sums. But Jesus noticed a poor woman, a widow, who cast in two mites, the smallest coins then in circulation. He called his disciples' attention to her and said,

Truly I say to you, this poor widow hath cast in more than all who were casting into the treasure; for all these out of their abundance have cast in their offerings but she out of her want hath cast in all that she had, her whole livelihood.

#### *Destruction of Jerusalem and the End of the World (M. 10 and 24; Mk. 13; L. 21)*

As they were going out of the Temple, one of the disciples said to Jesus, 'Master, look, what stones, and what buildings!' Jesus said to him,

Seest thou these great buildings? Amen, I say to you, the days shall come wherein there shall not be left here a stone upon a stone, that shall not be thrown down.



This prophecy startled the disciples, and when the party had ascended the slopes of Olivet, and Jesus had seated himself at a spot overlooking the Temple, Peter and Andrew and James and John asked him, 'Tell us when these things shall be, and what shall be the sign that they are all about to be accomplished?' Thus Mark and Luke, but in Matthew their question takes in a wider range: 'Tell us when these things shall be, and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the consummation of the world?' Jesus' reply was a prophecy concerning both the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world, considered respectively as type and antitype. In prophetic discourses of this kind, 'events belonging to the type and events belonging to the antitype are apt to be painted together, as it were, on the same canvas and the perspective is foreshortened in such a way that there appears to be no interval of time between the two. It is in this way that Our Lord conjoins the visitation of God which was the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman armies with the visitation of the world by God at the end of time' (Sutcliffe, *op. cit.*). Prophetic writing is not 'history written in advance' and cannot be judged by the same standards as written history. It is a glimpse into the unknown future, essentially mysterious, often symbolic, and always more or less vague. This applies even more forcibly to prophecies concerning the end of the world, called apocalyptic literature. Such prophecies are to be found in Isaiah, Ezechiel, Daniel and other books of the Old Testament, and there was also a considerable apocalyptic literature outside the canon of the Old Testament current at the time of Our Lord. Jesus not only used the same style as these apocalyptic writers, but frequently quoted their very words, as the references given will show. We have combined the reports of the first

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three Gospels, giving alternative versions in brackets where there is a difference of meaning.

Look to it that no man lead you astray. For many shall come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and 'The time is at hand,' and they shall lead many astray; follow them not. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars (and rebellions). Take heed, be not alarmed; these things 'must befall' (Daniel 2, 28), but the end is not yet (will not be at once). For 'nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom' (II Chron. 15, 6; Isaiah 19, 2), and there shall be plagues and famines and earthquakes in places; but all these things are only the beginning of sorrows.

Look ye to yourselves. Beware of men, for they shall deliver you up to councils, and ye shall be beaten in synagogues, and shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a witness unto them and unto the Gentiles. (And thus it shall fall out that ye bear witness.) And unto all the nations must the gospel first be preached. And when they lead you away to deliver you up, have no care beforehand as to what ye shall say; but whatsoever is given you in that hour, that speak; for it is not ye that speak but the Holy Spirit. (Set it therefore in your hearts not to labour in preparing your defence, for myself will give you words and wisdom which not all your adversaries shall be able to resist or gainsay.)

And then 'shall many be scandalized' (Daniel 11, 41), and they shall betray one another and hate one another. And many false prophets shall arise and shall lead many astray. And because iniquity shall be multiplied, the charity of the many shall grow cold. Brother shall deliver up brother to death, and a father his child; and 'children shall rise up against their parents' (Micheas 7, 6) and shall put them to death. Ye shall be delivered up even by parents and brothers and kinsmen and friends, and some of you they shall put to death.



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And ye shall be hated by all because of my name. And never a hair from your head shall perish; your patience shall win you your souls. But he that hath persevered to the end, he shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached throughout the world for a witness unto all the nations; and then shall come the end. (When they persecute you in this city, flee ye to that. Amen I say to you, ye shall not finish the cities of Israel before the Son of Man come.)

And when ye see Jerusalem being encompassed by armies, then know ye that her desolation is at hand. When therefore ye see 'the abomination of desolation' spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing 'in a holy place' (Daniel 9, 27 and 12, 11)—let him that readeth understand—then let those in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let those in the country not enter therein. Let not him that is upon the housetop come down to fetch what is in his house, neither let him that is in the field turn back to fetch his cloak. For these are the days of chastisement, that all things that are written may be fulfilled. Woe to them that are with child and to them that give suck in those days! For great distress shall be over the land, and wrath upon this people, they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and be carried into captivity to all the nations, and Jerusalem shall be trampled upon by the gentiles, until the seasons of the gentiles be fulfilled. Pray that your flight be not in the winter or on the sabbath; for there shall then be great 'affliction, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now' (Daniel 12, 1) and never shall be. And unless those days had been shortened, no flesh had been saved; but because of the elect those days shall be shortened.

Then if anyone say to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ' or 'there', believe it not. For there shall arise false christs and 'false prophets and they shall display great signs and wonders' (Deut, 13, 1), so as to mislead, if possible even the elect. Behold, I have told you beforehand. If therefore they say

to you, 'Behold he is in the wilderness,' go not forth; 'behold, he is in the store-rooms', believe it not. For as the lightning cometh forth out of the east and shineth even unto the west, so shall be the coming of the Son of Man. Where-soever the body be, there shall the vultures be gathered together [cf. Chap. 7: The Coming of Christ].

And straightway after the affliction of those days (in those days, after that affliction), 'the sun shall be darkened and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens shall be shaken' (Isaiah 13, 10 and 34, 4); and on earth there shall be anguish of nations bewildered by the roaring of the sea and of the surge, men fainting from terrified expectation of the things that are to come upon the world. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven; and then 'shall all the tribes of the earth wail' (Zac. 12, 12), and they shall see 'the Son of Man coming upon the clouds of heaven' (Daniel 7, 13) with power and great glory. And he shall send forth his angels 'with a great trumpet' (Isaiah 27, 13) and 'they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from end to end of the heavens' (Zac. 2, 6; Deut. 30, 4)—(from the ends of the earth unto the ends of the heavens).

But when these things are beginning to befall, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is at hand. And from the fig-tree learn her parable. As soon as the branch thereof cometh to be tender and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh. So in like manner yourselves, when ye see all these things, know ye that it is nigh, at the door (that the kingdom of God is nigh). Amen, I say to you, this generation shall not pass away until all these things be accomplished [cf. Chap. 5: First Prediction of Passion]. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

But about that day and hour none knoweth, not even the angels of heaven, nor yet the Son, but the Father alone



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[cf. Chap. 9: The Ascension]. But take heed unto yourselves lest haply your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness and the cares of everyday life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a snare. For it shall come upon all that dwell upon the face of the whole earth. But watch ye, praying at every season, in order that ye may be able to escape all these things which are to befall, and to stand before the Son of Man. Take heed, watch; for ye know not when is the time. It is as if a man on his travels should leave his house and give authority to his servants, to each one his work, and had commanded the porter to keep watch. Watch ye, therefore, for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, whether at evening or at midnight or at cock-crow or in the morning, lest he come suddenly and find you sleeping. And what I say to you, I say to all, watch.

As already explained, the two events envisaged, the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world, are pictured, as it were, on a single canvas, the former event being an image on a smaller scale of the second, type and antitype. Sometimes the one, sometimes the other, and sometimes both are referred to. Also it happens that here and there the earlier event is spoken of in language more properly applicable to the later event, precisely because the destruction of Jerusalem is regarded as a small-scale end of the world, and the end of the world as a large-scale destruction of Jerusalem. The prophecy regarding Jerusalem was fulfilled so exactly that Rationalist critics refuse to believe that the Gospels were written before the actual event; there is, however, good evidence that they were. Luke appears to explain 'the abomination of desolation' (M. and Mk.) as the investment of Jerusalem by a hostile army, but some commentators think it refers to a specific profanation of the Temple, and offer several conjectures as to what this could have been.

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Events preceding and accompanying the end of the world are described in the language common to the apocalyptic writers, which is largely symbolical. The words, 'This generation shall not pass away until all these things be accomplished' clearly refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, for Jesus went on to say that 'about *that* day or that hour [viz. of the end of the world] no man knoweth.' The statement that not even the Son knew 'that day and hour' is understood by Catholics to mean that this was something that he was not commissioned to reveal.

#### *The Wise and Foolish Virgins (M. 25)*

Matthew here gives three parables in succession, all of which illustrate and develop the closing words of the foregoing discourse on watchfulness for the Second Coming of Christ and readiness to render a satisfactory account of one's life.

Then shall the kingdom of the heavens be like to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom. Now five of them were foolish, and five were wise. For on taking their lamps the foolish took with them no oil; but the wise took oil in their flasks together with their lamps. And whereas the bridegroom tarried, they all became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there came a cry, 'Behold the bridegroom, come ye forth to meet him!' Thereupon all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise made answer, saying, 'There may not be enough for us and for you; go ye rather unto them that sell, and buy ye for yourselves'. But whilst they were departing to buy, the bridegroom came; and the virgins that were ready went in with him to the marriage-feast, and the door was shut. Later there come also the other



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virgins, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' But he answered and said, 'Amen, I say to you, I know you not.' Watch ye therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour.

Among the Jews, it was only some time after the marriage ceremony that the bride was handed over to her husband. In the story the bride is awaiting the coming of the bridegroom to conduct her to her new home. Jesus himself gave the lesson of the parable in his concluding sentence. The parable has also been interpreted allegorically by Christian writers, but, says Fr. Lagrange, 'it is not an allegory. The comparison is intended to bring out this one point—and how wonderfully it succeeds!—that nothing is of any avail if we are not ready at the moment when the Son of Man appears in order to lead the guests to his banquet.'

#### *The Parable of the Talents (M. 25)*

Not only must Christ's followers be ready and fully prepared when their Master returns, but also they must be faithful servants, devoted to his interests, while he is absent.

It is as when a man who was going abroad called his servants and delivered to them his belongings. To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one—to each according to his personal ability—and he went abroad. Straightway he that had received the five talents went and trafficked therewith, and gained five more. In like manner he that had received the two gained other two. But he that received the one went and dug into the earth, and hid therein his lord's money. Now after a long time the lord of those servants cometh and maketh up his accounts with them. And he that had received the five talents came bringing five more talents, and said, 'My lord, thou didst deliver to me five talents; behold, I have gained five talents more.'

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His lord said to him, 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Thou wast faithful over few things, I will place thee over many; enter thou into the joy of thy lord.' He also that had received the two talents came and said, 'My lord, thou didst deliver to me two talents; behold, I have gained two talents more.' His lord said to him, 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant! Thou wast faithful over few things, I will place thee over many; enter thou into the joy of thy lord.' He too that had received the single talent came and said, 'My lord, I knew thee to be a hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and garnering where thou hast not winnowed; so being afraid, I went and hid thy talent in the earth. Behold, thou hast what is thine.' And his lord answered and said to him, 'Thou wicked and slothful servant! Knewest thou that I reap where I have not sown, and garner where I have not winnowed? Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money with the bankers, and I at my coming would have recovered what was mine with interest. Take ye therefore the talent from him, and give it to him that hath the ten talents. For to everyone that hath shall be given, and given abundantly; but as for him that hath not, even what he hath shall be taken from him. And that useless servant cast ye forth into the outer darkness; there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.'

This parable bears so close a resemblance to that of the Minas, spoken at Jericho only a few days before to an audience which included the Twelve, that many commentators think it is another version of the same parable, placed here by Matthew out of its original context. Like the Minas, it teaches that Christ's followers must be active workers in his interest, and employ usefully in his service the gifts entrusted to them. The sums mentioned here are large—a talent was equal to six thousand drachmas, or sixty times more than a mina. Here, too, the sums entrusted varied according to the



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servant's capabilities, while in the Minas each of the ten received the same amount. But these variations probably have no special significance. The lesson of the parable is summed up in the condemnation of the 'useless servant'. If we do not use God's gifts for his greater glory, we are 'useless'. *A fortiori*, they will be condemned who not only fail to use but misuse God's gifts.

#### *Love for Christ shown by Love for Brethren (M. 25)*

The foregoing lesson given by Christ to his disciples on their love of God, shown by zeal in his service, is followed appropriately by a lesson on the love they should have one for another, shown by readiness to help and serve one another.

But when the Son of Man cometh in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and all the nations shall be gathered together before him. And he shall separate men one from another, as the shepherd doth separate the sheep from the goats; and he shall place the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left. Then shall the Kings say to those on his right, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and ye gave me to eat, thirsty and ye gave me to drink: I was a stranger and ye brought me within, naked and ye clothed me: I was sick and ye visited me, in prison and ye came unto me.' Then shall the just answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see thee hungry and did feed thee, or thirsty and did give thee to drink? When did we see thee a stranger and did bring thee within, or naked and did clothe thee? When did we see thee sick or in prison and did come unto thee?' And the King answering shall say to them, 'Amen I say to you, inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it to me.'

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Then shall he say likewise to those on his left: 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into the everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and ye gave me not to eat, thirsty and ye gave me not to drink: I was a stranger and ye brought me not within, naked and ye clothed me not: sick and in prison, and ye visited me not.' Then shall they likewise answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see thee hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to thee?' Then shall he answer them, saying, 'Amen, I say to you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of these least, neither did ye do it to me.' And these shall depart unto everlasting punishment, but the just unto everlasting life.

The above is not a parable in the strict sense, because there is no 'comparison', but it resembles a parable in that it is a story designed to teach one particular lesson. The lesson is that to be a true disciple of Jesus Christ, one must see him in every one of his brethren and treat each brother as one would treat Christ himself. Again and again Jesus had taught in public that men must exercise forgiveness if they hoped to be forgiven, that as they treated others, so God would treat them. Here, speaking to his disciples, he sets a still higher standard. It is no longer a question of forgiving injuries but of active love between the brethren, of spontaneous service rendered by one to another. Such service Jesus accepts as done to himself, while on the other hand the refusal of such service is in effect a refusal to Jesus himself. And this spirit of active charity is indispensable. Those whose deeds have shown that they possessed it are acknowledged as authentic Christians and admitted to heaven. Those whose deeds have shown that they lacked it—whatever their professions may have been—are rejected and dismissed to hell.

The opening description of the Coming of the Son of Man



—the ‘Good Shepherd’ has now become ‘the King’ and Judge—and the gathering of the nations for judgment is only the setting for the colloquy which takes place between ‘the King’ and those who, it may be assumed, claim to have been his disciples. The latter comprise both those placed on the right and those placed on the left. The difference between them is that those on the right have justified their claim, while those on the left have not. ‘Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father, who is in heaven.’ Thus, it is a mistake to take the above as a complete picture of the Final Judgment, or to conclude that all men will be judged on these lines. Jesus here was speaking to his disciples, and his lesson was specially for them.

*Judas Turns Traitor (M. 26; Mk. 14; L. 22)*

‘When Jesus had brought all these words to a close, he said to his disciples,’ according to Matthew,

Ye know that after two days cometh the Passover, and the Son of Man is to be delivered up to be crucified.

Meanwhile Jesus’ enemies were holding consultations at the house of the high priest, Caiaphas, to find some means of seizing and killing him, without causing a popular disturbance. Strange to say, it was one of the Twelve who came to their aid. On the Wednesday they were approached by Judas Iscariot, who said, ‘What will ye give me to betray him unto you?’ According to Matthew, the reward agreed upon was no more than thirty shekels or 120 drachmas, the price of a common slave, but the evangelist is quoting the words of the prophet Zacharias (11, 12): ‘They weighed for my wages thirty pieces of silver.’ Judas knew that at night Jesus went outside the city and was to be found practically

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alone, and he promised to lead their men to the spot and deliver him into their hands.

#### *Preparations for the Last Supper*

On the Thursday morning, the disciples, according to Matthew and Mark, asked Jesus where they would all eat the Passover meal. There is controversy as to which day exactly that year the Passover was celebrated by the Jews, but it has been established that Jesus was crucified on the Friday, and that the Last Supper consequently took place on the Thursday. Whether this was the ordinary Jewish paschal meal is a point on which even Catholic commentators are not agreed. According to Luke, it was Jesus who took the initiative, telling Peter and John,

Go ye and prepare for us that we may eat the passover.

They asked him where it was to be, and he replied,

Go ye into the city, and upon your entering there shall meet you a man carrying a pitcher of water; follow him to the house whereinto he goeth. And ye shall say to the master of the house, 'The Master saith to thee, My time is near; at thy house I keep the passover with my disciples' (Where is the guest-chamber wherein I may eat the passover with my disciples?). And he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready; there prepare ye for us.

And it happened as Jesus had said, and they prepared the Passover.



## CHAPTER 9

### THE CLIMAX

*The Last Supper (M. 26; Mk. 14; L. 22; J. 13)*

AT THE APPOINTED time Jesus and the Twelve took their places at the supper table, and Jesus said,

With desire have I desired [i.e. I have ardently desired] to eat this passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you that I shall eat of it no more until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

And he took the first cup and gave thanks, and said,

Take ye this and share it among you; for I say to you, I shall not drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in the kingdom of my Father (until the kingdom of God come).

Heaven was represented metaphorically as an eternal banquet, and Jesus, as so often in his discourses, passed easily from the material to the spiritual sense of a phrase.

According to Luke, there had been some dispute among the Twelve as to 'which of them was to be reputed greatest'. If the incident is rightly placed here (cf. Chap. 8: James and John make a Request), it would seem that the dispute had concerned their respective places at table. According to the custom of the time, the table will have been surrounded by couches on three sides; the meal was taken in a reclining position, leaning on the left elbow. We are told that John was at Jesus' right, for his head was 'at Jesus' bosom'. Judas was near enough for Jesus to be able to hand him 'the morsel' without attracting attention, and Peter was evidently at some distance. Jesus now referred to their dispute, saying,

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The kings of the gentiles lord it over them, and they that hold authority over them take the name 'Benefactor'. But not so with you. Nay, let him that is greatest among you become as the youngest, and the chief as he that serveth. For who is the greater, he that reclineth at table or he that serveth? Is it not he that reclineth? But I am in the midst of you as he that serveth. But ye are they who have remained with me throughout my trials. And I appoint to you—even as my Father hath appointed to me a kingdom—that ye eat and drink at my table in my kingdom; and ye shall sit upon thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

It was then presumably that, as reported by John, Jesus rose from the table, laid aside his outer garments, girded himself with a towel, poured water into a basin, and, making the circuit of the couches, washed each disciple's feet. When it came to Peter's turn, he protested, 'Lord, dost thou wash my feet?' Jesus replied,

What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt understand hereafter.

But Peter insisted, 'Thou shalt never wash my feet.' Jesus said,

If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

Then Peter exclaimed, 'Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.' Jesus said,

He that is bathed needeth not to wash save his feet, but is clean all over; and ye are clean—but not all.

Judas, says John, was the exception referred to in the last words. Having resumed his garments and retaken his place at table, Jesus said to them all,

Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord; and ye say well, for so I am. If therefore I, the Lord and the Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash



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one another's feet; for I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so ye do also. Amen, amen, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his lord; nor is an apostle greater than he that hath sent him. If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them. I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'He that eateth my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me' (Ps. 40). I tell you now before it befalleth, that ye may believe when it hath befallen that I am he [i.e. to whom the prophecy refers]. Amen, amen, I say to you, he that receiveth whomso I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him who hath sent me.

When Jesus had said these things, he was troubled in spirit, and at length said,

Amen, amen, I say to you, one of you will betray me, even he that eateth with me. (Behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me upon the table—L.)

His hearers were filled with consternation, and began to look at one another wondering which could be the traitor of whom Jesus had spoken. Then, turning to Jesus, they all began to ask, 'Is it I, Lord?' Jesus replied,

One of the Twelve, he that hath dipped his hand into the bowl with me, he shall betray me. The Son of Man goeth, as it is written of him; but woe to that man through whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It were good for that man if he had not been born.

Judas, who was evidently near Jesus, then said to him 'Is it I, Master?' And Jesus replied,

Thou hast said it.

Literally the words are: 'Thou hast said,' and as this turn of speech was used several times by Our Lord during his in-

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terrogations, it may be noted from this example that it is apparently a reply in the affirmative. It means, 'Thou hast said (though in the form of a question) what is in fact the truth.' See also 'Jesus before the Sanhedrin', especially the account given by Luke. The Westminster Version explains it as 'probably a qualified form of assent which, while admitting the particular statement, places the initial responsibility of eliciting it upon the questioner.' Thus practically all Catholic commentators, but Fr. Hugh Pope in *The Layman's New Testament* says: 'It is possible that it simply denotes a refusal to give to an undeserving questioner a direct answer.'

The fourth Gospel relates that Peter had beckoned to John and asked him to find out from Jesus which was the traitor. John thereupon leaned back and said quietly to Jesus, 'Lord, who is it?' Jesus told him,

He it is, for whom I shall dip this morsel and give it to him.

Then, dipping the morsel, he gave it to Judas. John implies that this was in the nature of a last appeal to Judas's conscience. But Judas rejected it, thereby giving himself finally to Satan. Jesus therefore said to him,

That which thou dost, do quickly.

And Judas rose and went out into the night. These various exchanges had not been overheard by the rest of the table, and the other disciples thought that Jesus had merely given Judas some commission in connection with the pasch or with the distribution of alms.

*Institution of the Eucharist (M. 26; Mk. 14; L. 22; 1 Cor. 11)*

It was after supper was finished, and probably after Judas had taken his departure, that Jesus instituted a new rite to commemorate the new Passover—not of a single people but



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for the whole of mankind—which was to be accomplished on the following day. We have four accounts of this institution, and we give them in turn:

Jesus took bread, and blessed and brake and gave to the disciples, saying, 'Take ye, eat, this is my body.' And he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink ye all from it; for this is my blood, the blood of the covenant, which is being shed for many unto the forgiveness of sins.' (M.)

He took bread and blessed and brake, and gave to them. And he said, 'Take ye, this is my body.' And he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all drank thereof. And he said to them, 'This is my blood, of the covenant, which is being shed on behalf of many.' (Mk.)

He took bread and gave thanks and brake and gave to them, saying, 'This is my body, which is being given on your behalf; this do ye in remembrance of me.' He took also the cup in like manner after the supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is being shed on your behalf.' (L.)

The Lord Jesus took bread, and giving thanks brake and said, 'This is my body, on your behalf; this do ye in remembrance of me.' In like manner after the supper he took the cup saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; this do ye, as often as ye drink thereof, in remembrance of me' (I Cor. 11).

In his sermon at Capharnaum on the bread of life (Chap. 4), Jesus had promised a bread from heaven which, unlike the manna given to the Israelites of old, would be the food of eternal life. 'The bread which I will give,' he had said, 'is my flesh, given for the life of the world,' and he had insisted, 'My flesh is real food, my blood is real drink.' Now, in the upper room, Jesus said over real bread, 'This is my body,' and over real wine, 'This is my blood.' Clearly he was ful-

filling the earlier promise. By his words—so the Church believes and declares—the reality (as distinct from the outward appearances) of the bread was converted into the Body of Christ (*Corpus Christi*), and the reality of the wine into the Blood of Christ, and so Jesus became really present under the appearances of bread and wine.

In all four accounts, too, there is mention either of a covenant or of an offering for the people. When the Old Covenant was ratified by the people of Israel, Moses offered sacrifices and then sprinkled the people with blood of the victims, saying, 'This is the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you' (*Exod.* 24). Jesus was telling his disciples that his approaching death on the cross was to be the sacrifice of a New Covenant, a sacrifice which would really atone for men's sins and make possible their restoration to God's favour and grace. In acquiring for themselves the fruits of his sacrifice, men would, metaphorically, be sprinkled with his blood, washed from their sins in his blood, cleansed and justified in his blood, as the Apostolic writers were to express it. And this 'Body' and 'Blood' which Jesus was now giving them to eat and drink, he declared to be the Body and Blood given and shed, offered in sacrifice. As on the cross, so here, he is both Priest and Victim. Hence the Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, has declared that this rite, which came to be called the Eucharist, and later the Mass, is a sacramental counterpart or reproduction of the sacrifice of Calvary, and itself a true though relative sacrifice, relative, that is, to the sacrifice of Calvary, and that by it is fulfilled the prophecy of Malachy: 'From the rising of the sun even to the going down . . . in every place there is sacrifice and a clean oblation.'

The use of sacrifice to propitiate the Deity is practically co-extensive with the human race, and so too is the idea of



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communion with God by partaking of the victim which has been offered in sacrifice. God in his Revelation through Jesus Christ responded to these aspirations of the human soul by providing a simple but truly propitiatory sacrifice, which at the same time permitted real communion between man and God, through the use of such ordinary things as bread and wine. By the words addressed to the Twelve, 'This do ye in remembrance of me,' Jesus conferred on them the power to offer this new sacrifice and also the power to consecrate in their turn other 'priests after the manner of Melchisedec' (Ps. 109 and Heb. 5), who should thus 'proclaim the death of the Lord, until he come.'

*Dialogue with Disciples (J. 13; M. 26; Mk. 14; L. 22)*

Jesus said to the remaining Eleven,

Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him; if God is glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and straightway shall he glorify him. Little children, a little while only I am with you; ye shall seek me, and as I said to the Jews, 'Whither I go, ye cannot come', so now I say to you. A new commandment I give to you, that ye love one another: that as I have loved you, so ye also love one another. Hereby shall all know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another.

Christ's followers were to be marked out from other men by their practice of fraternal charity, and the model Jesus proposed to them was 'as I have loved you'. In this lay the newness of the commandment, and also in the fundamental value which Jesus attached to fraternal charity. Love is fundamental in Christianity because 'God is love' (1 John 4, 8). In the words of St. Leo the Great, 'Man was made in the image of God to the end that he might imitate his creator: and the natural

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dignity of our race consists in this, that the goodness of the divine nature should be reflected in us as in a mirror. . . . By loving us, therefore, God restores us to his image: and that he may find in us goodness after the pattern of his own, he enables us to do what he does, kindling as it were the lamps of our minds, and inflaming us with the fire of his charity, that we may love not him only, but also whatever he loves.' Peter was dismayed by Jesus' announcement of his departure; he asked, 'Lord, whither goest thou?' Jesus replied,

Whither I go, thou canst not now follow me, but hereafter thou shalt follow.

Peter persisted, 'Why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thee.' Jesus said,

Wilt thou lay down thy life for me? Amen, amen, I say to thee, the cock shall not crow till thou hast denied me thrice.

The above is John's account. According to Matthew and Mark, Jesus said to the Eleven,

All ye shall be scandalized this night because of me; for it is written, 'I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be dispersed; but after I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee!'

Peter then said, 'Even if all shall be scandalized because of thee, I will never be scandalized.' Then Jesus said,

Amen I say to thee, this very night, before the cock crow (before the cock crows twice—Mk.) thou shalt deny me thrice.

Whereupon Peter declared, 'Though I should have to die with thee, I will not deny thee.' And so said all the others.

According to Luke, Jesus began by saying to Peter,



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Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath asked and obtained you, in order to sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not; and when once thou hast turned again, do thou establish thy brethren.

Peter then said, 'Lord, with thee I am ready to go both to prison and to death.' Jesus said,

I say to thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow to-day ere thrice thou deny that thou knowest me.

Then, still according to Luke, Jesus said to them all,

When I sent you forth without purse or wallet or shoes, did ye lack anything?

They said, 'Nothing.' He said to them,

Now, however, let him that hath a purse take it, and in like manner he that hath a wallet; and he that is without a purse, let him sell his cloak and buy a sword. For I say to you, that this which is written must be fulfilled in me, 'And he was reckoned among the wicked' (Isaiah 53, 12). For indeed what concerneth me doth reach fulfilment.

The last sentence of Jesus may mean, 'My course is about to be consummated.' But what did he mean by 'buying a sword'? Commentators explain that it was a purely figurative way of warning them to be prepared for a time of great danger and hazard. Some of his hearers, however, took it literally, and said, 'Behold, Lord, there are two swords here.' Jesus closed the subject by saying,

Enough.

It is not certain at what point exactly the above dialogue took place, or whether it all took place in the supper-room—Matthew and Mark place their accounts on the way to Gethsemane. Returning to the fourth Gospel, Jesus proceeded to

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console the disciples, saddened by the announcement of his imminent departure:

Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, and believe in me. In my Father's house there are many mansions [i.e. room for many]; were it not so, I would have told you, because I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I am coming again, and I will take you to myself, that where I am, ye also may be. And whither I go, ye know the way.

In the words 'My Father's house', Jesus may have been speaking both of the actual Temple and of Heaven, its antitype. 'Jesus was now on his way to that true House of God, of which the man-made sanctuary was but a figure. . . . There was one feature of the earthly temple which might help them to realize their place in the heavenly. . . . Attached to it were chambers, some for the storage of things necessary for Divine service, some for the convenience of the priests or of the Sanhedrin. It is perhaps in reference to those chambers that the Lord speaks of the 'many mansions' in the house not made with hands,' which they are to think of as 'a vast palace which would give shelter and rest to as many as the Lord willed' (H.B. Swete, *The Last Discourse and Prayer of Our Lord*).

Thomas now interrupted, 'Lord, we know not whither thou goest; how can we know the way?' Jesus replied,

I am the way and the truth and the life; no one goeth to the Father save through me. If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also. Henceforth ye know him and ye have seen him.

Philip said naïvely, 'Lord, shew us the Father, and it is enough for us.' Jesus said to him,

So long a time have I been with you, and thou dost not know me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.



### *Jesus in His Own Words*

How canst thou say, 'Shew us the Father'? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I say to you, I speak not of myself; but the Father abiding in me doth his works. Believe me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; otherwise, because of the works themselves believe. Amen, amen, I say to you, he that believeth in me, the works that I do, he also shall do, and greater than these shall he do, because I go to the Father, and whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, in order that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye ask anything in my name, I will do it.

#### *Promise of the Holy Spirit (J. 14)*

If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Advocate, that he may be with you for ever; the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it beholdeth him not nor knoweth him. But ye know him, because he abideth with you, and is in you.

The word 'advocate', in Greek *paracletos*, appears only in the writings of St. John. In his first Epistle (2, 1), it is applied to Our Lord: 'If any one has sinned, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just, who is a propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.' In Greek usage, the *paracletos* was 'a friend at court who pleaded the defendant's cause,' and also gave him counsel and support. Jesus told the Apostles that the Holy Spirit would dwell within them, and St. Paul will repeat, 'The Spirit of God dwelleth within you' (Rom. 8, 9) and say of the Christian that he is 'the temple of the Holy Spirit' (1 Cor. 6, 19) 'the temple of the living God' (11 Cor. 6, 16). The sharp contrast between the followers of Jesus Christ and the world is also brought out in St. John's writings.

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I will not leave you orphans; I am coming to you. Yet a little while, and the world beholdeth me no more; but ye behold me, because I live and ye shall live. In that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you. He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.

The 'coming' referred to by Jesus is his invisible coming in virtue of which he will be always with his followers: 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.' 'Behold I am with you all days, unto the consummation of the world.' Jesus will be with his flock through the activity of the Holy Spirit. The disciple Jude (Thaddaeus) now asked, 'Lord, what hath befallen that thou art about to manifest thyself to us, and not to the world?' Jesus did not answer the question directly, but said,

If any one loveth me, he will keep my word, and my Father shall love him, and we will come to him and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my words. And the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's who hath sent me.

Jude was thinking of an outward manifestation, but the manifestation Jesus had in mind was interior, to come about through the in-dwelling of the Blessed Trinity in the human soul. But only those who loved Jesus and kept his words could receive this manifestation, and thus the world had excluded itself. Throughout this discourse Jesus was not obscurely declaring his own Divinity.

### *Conclusion (J. 14)*

These things have I spoken to you; abiding with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send



### *Jesus in His Own Words*

in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your mind all the things that I have said to you. Peace I leave to you, my peace I give to you; not as the world giveth do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be dismayed. Ye have heard what I said to you, 'I go away and I am coming to you'. If ye loved me, ye would have rejoiced, because I go to the Father; for the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it befalleth, that when it befalleth ye may believe. I will no more speak many things with you, for the ruler of the world cometh, and in me he hath nothing; but [this is in order] that the world may know that I love the Father, and that as the Father hath given me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go hence.

'Peace to you' and 'Go in peace' were conventional forms of greeting and farewell. But on Jesus' lips the words were not conventional, for he really gives his followers 'peace' of soul, the fruit of their faith, confidence and sense of union with him. The Son could be said to be inferior to the Father in regard to his Sonship, his mission, his human nature, and his de-glorified state on earth. The above paragraph is definitely a conclusion, and the final words indicate that the party then left the supper room—after singing a psalm (M. and Mk.). But another discourse follows in the fourth Gospel. Either Jesus resumed his previous discourse, or the evangelist has added here further recollections of the same discourse, and perhaps even of other discourses, of Our Lord.

#### *The Disciple's Union with Jesus (J. 15)*

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he cleanseth [prunes], that it may bear more fruit. Ye are already clean, because of the word which I have spoken to you; abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide

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in the vine ; so neither can ye, unless ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye the branches ; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit, for apart from me ye can do nothing. If any one abide not in me, he is cast forth as the branch and withereth ; and they gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will and it shall be done to you. Herein is my Father glorified, in that ye bear much fruit, and become my disciples.

The prophets of the Old Testament had frequently represented the people of Israel as God's vine. Jesus and his followers are the New Israel, God's true vine. The purpose of a vine is to yield fruit for the owner, and the purpose of the New Israel, like the Old, is to give glory to God. 'The vine and the branches live the same life, are nourished by the same sap, and work together in the production of the same fruit' (Prat). Branches can only be fruitful so long as their vital union with the tree is maintained, and the disciple can only fulfil his end, namely, the greater glory of God, in virtue of his vital union with Jesus Christ. St. Paul will later use the metaphor of the human body (head and members) to convey the same idea.

As my Father hath loved me, I also have loved you ; abide in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love ; even as I have kept the Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be fulfilled. This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you. Greater love than this no one hath, than that he lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do the things that I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doth ; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. Ye have not



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chosen me, but I have chosen you, and have appointed you that ye should go and bear fruit, and your fruit should abide; that whatsoever ye ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. These things I command you, that ye love one another.

The Son's joy came from the knowledge that he was loved by the Father, and that he was doing his will. There is an analogy between the Father's love for the Son, and the Son's love for his disciples. The knowledge that he is loved by the Son and is doing his will should be the source of a joy in the disciple akin to the Son's joy in the knowledge of his Father's love. Jesus is about to prove the greatness of his love by dying for them, his friends, whom he has taken into his confidence. It was he who chose them and has now appointed them his Apostles. The fruits of their apostolate, in answer to their prayers, will be lasting fruits. All Christ's commands can be reduced to the precept of fraternal charity.<sup>1</sup>

#### *The World's Hatred of Jesus and His Followers (J. 15)*

If the world hateth you, know ye that it hath hated me before you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, for this cause the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his lord'. If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you; if they have kept my word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for my name's sake, because they know not him who hath sent me.

If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. He that hateth me, hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works that no other hath done, they would not

<sup>1</sup> St. Jerome quotes this Saying of Jesus from the Gospel according to the Hebrews: 'Never be joyful, save when ye behold your brother with love.'

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have sin; but now they have seen and they have hated both me and my Father. But [so it is] that the word may be fulfilled, which is written in their law, 'They have hated me without cause' (Ps. 34 and 68). When the Advocate is come, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father, he shall witness concerning me; and ye also are witnesses, because ye are with me from the beginning.

These things have I spoken to you, that ye may not be scandalized. They shall expel you from the synagogues; yea, the hour cometh when any one that killeth you shall think to be offering worship to God. And these things they shall do, because they have not known the Father, nor me. But these things have I spoken to you, that when their hour cometh ye may remember how I told you them. These things I did not tell you from the beginning because I was with you. But now I go to him that hath sent me, and none of you asketh me, 'Whither goest thou?' But because I have spoken these things to you, sorrow hath filled your heart. But I tell you the truth: it is expedient for you that I depart: for if I depart not, the Advocate will not come to you: but if I go, I will send him unto you. And when he hath come, he shall convict the world in respect of sin, and of justness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not in me: of justness, because I go to the Father, and ye are to behold me no more: of judgment, because the ruler of this world hath been judged.

Yet many things have I to say to you, but ye cannot bear them now. But when he shall have come, the Spirit of truth, he shall guide you to the whole truth: for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever things he heareth he shall speak, and the things that are to come he shall declare to you. He shall glorify me, for he shall take from that which is mine and declare it to you. All things whatsoever the Father hath are mine; for this cause have I said that he taketh of that which is mine and shall declare it to you.



As love was to be the mark of Jesus' disciples, so hatred would be the mark of those who had rejected him, hatred towards Jesus and all who bore his name. Jesus was thinking especially of the unbelieving Jews who stood condemned by their own deafness to his words and blindness to his deeds. Although Jesus' ministry was about to end, it would be continued by the Holy Spirit and by the Apostles, but these would have to face persecution as Jesus was now doing. The words 'None of you asketh me, "Whither goest thou?"', read strangely here, because not long before Peter had put that very question. But they can either be explained by the way in which these chapters were composed, as stated above, or they can be taken to mean, 'You no longer ask.' Jesus' statement that he must first go, and that only then would the Spirit come, touches the Divine scheme of redemption. In the words of Cardinal Newman, 'Christ's work of mercy has two chief parts: what he did for all men, what he does for each; what he did once for all, what he does for one by one continually; what he did externally to us, what he does within us; what he did on earth, what he does in heaven; what he did in his own Person, what he does by his Spirit' (*Lectures on Justification*). Thus, according to God's plan, it was necessary, once the work of redemption was completed, that the sensible, localized presence of the Son should end and be succeeded by the universal, invisible presence of the Spirit, who would apply to individual men all that Christ had done for them. The Holy Spirit, in his rôle of Advocate, would show that it was not Jesus who had been the sinner but the Jews in refusing to believe in him, that it was not the enemies of Jesus who were 'just' but Jesus himself, as was to be proved by his Resurrection and Ascension, and that what they regarded as a definite condemnation of Jesus was in reality the definite condemnation of their master, 'the ruler

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of this world'. As the Spirit of truth, he would guide the Church, and especially the Apostles, to the truth, the whole truth. Not that he would add anything to the Revelation made by Jesus, for he would receive his message from the Father, and so from Jesus himself, because all that belongs to the Father belongs also to the Son. The work of the Holy Spirit would be to enable the Church to understand more clearly and fully the teachings of Jesus Christ.

### *Jesus Speaks of the Immediate Future (J. 16)*

A little while, and ye behold me no more; and again a little while and ye shall see me.

This saying puzzled the disciples, who began whispering one to another. Jesus continued,

Do ye inquire among yourselves about this saying of mine, 'A little while and ye behold me not, and again a little while and ye shall see me'? Amen, amen, I say to you, that yourselves shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice; ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour hath come; but when she hath brought forth her child, she remembereth no more her anguish, for the joy that a man hath been born into the world. And ye, therefore, now indeed have sorrow; but I shall see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no one shall take from you.

The above refers most aptly to Jesus' reappearance after the Resurrection, but the joy of the Resurrection would remain with the disciples for all time.

And in that day ye shall ask me no question. Amen, amen, I say to you, if ye ask the Father anything, he will give it to you in my name. Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name; ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be fulfilled.



### *Jesus in His Own Words*

The Resurrection would have cleared away all the obscurities which perplexed the disciples, and besides they would have the guidance of the Holy Spirit. They would pray confidently to the Father trusting in the merits of Christ, and for his sake the Father would grant their petitions. Hitherto they have had Jesus with them.

These things have I spoken to you in parables; the hour cometh when I shall no more speak to you in parables, but shall speak to you plainly of the Father. In that day ye shall ask in my name, and I say not to you that I shall ask the Father for you; for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I have come forth from God. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world and I go unto the Father.

The disciples here declared that Jesus had now indeed spoken plainly, answering their difficulties before they were uttered. This was a Divine gift, and so they believed that Jesus had truly been sent by God. Their faith though real, was still far from perfect, and Jesus replied,

Do ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, and is now come, that ye shall be scattered every man to his own, and myself ye shall leave alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. These things I have spoken to you, that in me ye may have peace. In the world ye are to have affliction; nevertheless, have courage, I have overcome the world.

*Jesus Prays for Himself, for the Disciples, and for All Believers*  
(J. 17)

Then standing with his eyes raised heavenwards, Jesus uttered the following prayer:

Father, the hour is come: glorify thy Son, in order that the Son may glorify thee: even as thou hast given him power

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over all flesh, in order that to all thou hast given him, he should give to them everlasting life. (Now this is everlasting life, that they know thee, the only true God, and him whom thou hast sent, Jesus Christ.) I have glorified thee upon earth, having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do; and now do thou glorify me, Father, with thyself, with the glory which I had before the world was, with thee.

In the fourth Gospel, 'glory' often means the manifestation of Divine power. Man is glorified by God and at the same time glorifies God when he becomes a willing instrument in God's hand for the carrying out of God's work. Jesus had now arrived at the supreme hour of his mission, which would complete and crown his glorification of the Father. He had been given authority over all mankind, and he was about to offer his life for all mankind, though not all would in fact receive the fruit of his sacrifice, everlasting life, for not all would believe in the Father and the Son. The sentence in brackets may be a comment of the evangelist (Lagrange). 'As truth in St. John is the supreme Reality, so knowledge is apprehension of the highest Truth. Such knowledge is identical with the highest life, the life which lifts men up into the world of realities, and belongs to the eternal order of things' (Swete, *op. cit.*). Jesus now turned in thought to his disciples, the Eleven.

I have manifested thy name to the men whom thou hast given me out of the world; thine they were, and to me thou gavest them, and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are from thee; because the words which thou hast given me I have given to them, and they have received them, and they have truly known that I came forth from thee, and have believed that thou didst send me. For them I pray; not for the world do I pray, but for them whom thou hast given me,



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because they are thine—and all things mine are thine, and all things thine are mine—and because I have been glorified in them. And I am no more in the world; and they are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep them in thy name, which thou hast given me [to declare], that they may be one, as we. While I was with them I kept them in thy name which thou hast given me, and I guarded them, and not one of them hath perished, save the son of perdition, in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I come to thee, and these things I speak in the world, in order that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word, and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou take them out of the world, but that thou keep them from evil. They are not of the world, as I am not of the world. Hallow [sanctify] them in the truth; thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, so I also have sent them into the world. And for them I hallow [sanctify] myself, in order that they too may be hallowed [sanctified] in truth.

The Eleven, Jesus said, were convinced both of his Divine origin and of his Divine mission: 'that I came forth from thee . . . and that thou didst send me.' He gave four reasons why he was praying for them: (1) because they belonged to the Father—and consequently to the Son; (2) because he (Jesus) was glorified in his disciples (see above for meaning of 'glory'); (3) because the disciples were about to be deprived of the visible presence of their Master; (4) because they would be hated by unbelievers. The petition begins with the invocation of the Father as 'holy'; it was for the sanctification of the Eleven that Jesus was asking. The holiness of God is that absolute moral perfection which is his by nature. In Biblical usage, men and things are called 'holy' when they are consecrated to God's service, and also, in the case of men, when

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they participate in the moral perfection of God. There are two ideas, therefore, in 'holiness' as applied to men, the idea of separation from what is profane, consecration to God's service, and the idea of moral perfection appropriate to and resulting from that consecration. (In the Epistles of St. Paul all Christians are called 'saints', because they have been claimed by God as his own and have received from him the free gift of interior justness.)

Jesus prayed that the Eleven might be kept united through their fidelity to and practical correspondence with the truth which he had manifested concerning the Father, i.e. through faith and charity. On 'my joy', see 'The Disciple's Union with Jesus', above. After repeating that the disciples 'are not of the world' (by reason of the truth manifested to them), he went on to pray that they might be 'hallowed in the truth', i.e. consecrated to the service of the truth (Durand), and also penetrated and transformed by it (Lagrange); consecrated to God's service in the preaching of the Gospel (Prat); serve God by adhering to and making known God's word, as Jesus had made it known (W.V.). This 'hallowing' of the Apostles was to be brought about by Jesus' hallowing of himself: 'For them I hallow myself.' Commentators see here a plain reference to the approaching sacrifice of Calvary. Jesus could not make himself more perfect morally than he was already, but he could consecrate, dedicate himself as the victim for sacrifice, and it is thus that he now 'hallows' himself, offering himself to God for all men, but especially for the Apostles who are to continue his work, 'that they too may be hallowed in truth'. After this prayer for his Apostles, Jesus prayed for all the others who believed in him.

Not for them only do I pray, but also for those who believe in me through their word, that they all may be one, even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee—that they too may



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be in us, in order that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou hast given me, I have given them, that they may be one, as we are one—I in them, and thou in me—that they may be perfected in unity, in order that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and that thou hast loved them, even as thou hast loved me.

The source of the unity which was to distinguish Jesus' followers was not only their acceptance of revealed truth but also their transformation by Divine power or grace—'the glory which thou hast given me'—after the model of Jesus Christ himself. Being of one mind and heart with Jesus they would be of one mind and heart among themselves, and they would be united to Jesus and to his Father. So St. John will write later, 'If we love one another, God abideth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit' (1 John 4, 12). Jesus prayed that this unity might be fully realized, so as to be manifest to 'the world'. He prayed too that, having thus been glorified by and having glorified God on earth like their Master, his followers would eventually share in his unveiled glory in heaven.

Father, that which thou hast given me, I will that where I am, they also may be with me; in order that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me, because thou didst love me before the foundation of the world. Just Father, indeed, the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me; and I have made known thy name to them, and will make it known, in order that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

The Father loves the Son, and those who are united to the Son share in that love of the Father, who sees the Son in them and them in him.

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*The Agony in Gethsemane* (M. 26; Mk. 14; L. 22; J. 18)

After leaving the house where the Last Supper had taken place, Jesus and his disciples went out of the city and across the valley of the Cedron, to an olive orchard named Gethsemane (oil-press), lying at the foot of the Mount of Olives. Here they used sometimes to pass the night. On entering the orchard, Jesus said to the disciples,

Sit ye here, whilst I go yonder and pray.

But Peter, James and John he took with him further, and as they went along, Jesus began to be distressed and dismayed. He said to them,

My soul is sorrowful unto death [ready to die with sorrow]; stay ye here and watch with me. Pray that ye enter not into temptation.

He went on about a stone's throw, and then threw himself prostrate on the ground and prayed, saying,

My Father, if it be possible (if thou wilt—L.), let this cup pass away from me; yet not as I will but as thou wilt (M.). (Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee; turn aside this cup from me; yet not what I will, but what thou wilt—Mk. Not my will but thine be done—L.).

Luke adds: 'There appeared to him an angel from heaven to strengthen him. And falling into an agony he prayed the more earnestly; and his sweat became as drops of blood falling down to the ground.' Then rising, Jesus came to the three disciples but found them sleeping (for sorrow—L.). He said to Peter,

Simon, sleepest thou? Couldst thou not watch one hour with me? Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. (Why sleep ye? Arise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation—L.)



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Then Jesus resumed his prayer, saying,

My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, thy will be done.

A second time he came to the three, and found them heavy with sleep, and again returned to his prayer. Coming to them the third time, he said,

Sleep on now, and rest!

But immediately added,

Enough! The hour is come; behold, the Son of Man is to be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Arise, let us go; behold, he that betrayeth me is at hand.

As the Temptation formed a prelude to Jesus' public ministry, so the Agony in Gethsemane formed a prelude to his Passion. It was permitted that at the outset he should experience the most extreme depression, dismay, fear, and utter shrinking from the task before him. This was so much in contrast with his attitude both immediately before and after the Agony that one cannot doubt that it was an ordeal to which he deliberately submitted, as he was to submit to the Passion itself. And it wonderfully completes the picture of Jesus as truly man, and a pattern for men. Many of his followers would face torments as great as his with complete equanimity and even joy, but the majority of men are differently constituted; however firm their will they cannot escape a physical and emotional shrinking from suffering and torture. Jesus condescended to pass through a similar experience, so that it could be said of him, 'We have not a High Priest who is unable to realize in himself our weaknesses, but rather one who has been tried in every way like ourselves, short of sin. . . . In the days of his flesh he offered up prayers and supplications to him who could save him from death, with a loud cry

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and tears, and was heard because of his devout submission, and though he was Son, he learned obedience in the school of suffering . . .' (Heb. 5).

#### *The Betrayal and Arrest (M. 26; Mk. 14; L. 22; J. 18)*

Even as Jesus spoke, a great crowd of Temple guards and servants, bearing lanterns and torches and weapons, made their appearance, led by Judas. John alone mentions that there was also a 'cohort' of soldiers under a 'tribune'. The traitor had arranged to point Jesus out to them by embracing him. So he at once went up to Jesus, and, saying, 'Hail, Master', kissed him. Jesus said to him,

Friend, for what a purpose art thou come? (Judas, thou betrayest the Son of Man with a kiss?—L.).

According to John's account, Jesus advanced towards the crowd, and asked them,

Whom seek ye?

They answered, 'Jesus the Nazarene.' Jesus said,

I am he.

At these words, 'they went backwards and fell to the ground.' When they had recovered themselves, Jesus repeated his question, and then said,

I have told you that I am he. If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way.

But Peter had drawn his sword, and he struck at one of the servants—John gives his name, Malchus—and cut off his right ear. Jesus said to Peter,

Put back thy sword into its place; for all that take the sword shall perish by the sword. Or thinkest thou that I



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cannot beseech my Father, and he forthwith will furnish me more than twelve legions of angels? How then are the Scriptures to be fulfilled, that so it must befall?—M. (Put up thy sword into the scabbard: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?—J.)

Luke adds that Jesus cured the wounded servant with a touch of his hand, saying,

Suffer ye even this [or, Let them have their way in this].

According to the first of these interpretations, the words were addressed to his captors, according to the second, to the disciples. Jesus then said to the crowd,

Are ye come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to arrest me? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and ye stretched not forth your hands against me (ye seized me not—M. and Mk.). But this is your hour, and the power of darkness. (But [it is] that the scriptures may be fulfilled—Mk.)

Then the guards seized Jesus and bound him, while the disciples made their escape. The latter had failed to realize the urgency of the danger, and so had not heeded Jesus' earlier warning to pray. Hence their desertion of the Master in his hour of peril.

*Jesus Questioned by Annas (J. 18)*

Jesus' captors took him back to the city, to the residence of the high priest, Caiaphas. But on the way they made a brief halt at the house of Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, himself a former high priest and still a person of great authority among the Jews. Annas, we are told, questioned him concerning his disciples and concerning his doctrine. Jesus replied,

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I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in the synagogue and in the temple, where all the Jews come together; and in secret I have spoken nothing. Why dost thou question me? Question those who have heard what I said to them. Behold, they know what things I said.

At these words, one of the attendants struck Jesus, saying, 'Answerest thou thus the high priest?' Jesus said to him,

If I have spoken ill, bear witness concerning the evil; but if well, why strikest thou me?

*Jesus Before the Sanhedrin (M. 27; Mk. 15; L. 23)*

According to Matthew and Mark, the main 'trial' of Jesus took place in the house of Caiaphas during the night, but they speak of a morning session of the Sanhedrin, and this alone is mentioned by Luke. It may be noted that, according to the Talmud, trials involving the capital sentence were only valid in daylight.

According to Matthew and Mark, then, many members of the Sanhedrin (priests, scribes and elders) had gathered, or then gathered, at the house of Caiaphas to examine Jesus. As we know, their leaders had already decided on his death, but to give an air of legality to the proceedings it was necessary to charge him with some grave crime. For such a charge, however, they were unable to produce any evidence. Many false witnesses testified, but they only contradicted one another. The worst they could find to say was that Jesus had threatened to destroy the Temple and build another in its place. But this hardly justified the death penalty, and besides, even here the witnesses were not in agreement as to what Jesus had actually said (cf. Chap. 2: First Passover). Caiaphas then rose and, addressing Jesus, said, 'Answerest thou naught? What is it that these men allege against thee?' But Jesus



remained silent. The high priest then said, 'I adjure thee by the living God to tell us whether thou art the Christ, the Son of God (M.). (Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?—Mk.)' As already pointed out, the phrase 'Son of God' was currently used of a person specially favoured by God or one who was acceptable to God, but the phrase '*the* Son of God' indicated actual relationship with God and could not be used of a mere creature without blasphemy. Jesus now replied,

Thou hast said it. Nevertheless I say to you, hereafter [from now onwards] ye shall see the Son of Man seated on the right of the Power and coming upon the clouds of heaven (M.).

I am, and ye shall see the Son of Man seated on the right of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven (Mk.).

'Then the high priest rent his garments, saying, "He hath blasphemed. What further need have we of witness? Lo, now ye have heard the blasphemy; what think ye?" And they answered and said, "He is worthy of death". . . . And at day-break (in the morning—Mk.) all the high priests and the elders of the people took counsel together against Jesus that they might put him to death. And they bound him and led him away and delivered him to Pilate, the governor.'

According to Luke, 'when day broke, there gathered together the assembly of the elders of the people, both high priests and scribes, and they led him away to their council and said, "If thou art the Christ, tell us." He said to them,

If I tell you, ye will not believe; and if I question, ye will not answer. Nevertheless henceforth the Son of Man shall be seated on the right of the Power of God.

'They all said, "Thou, then, art the Son of God?" He said unto them,

Ye say that I am.

'They said, "What further need have we of witness? Ourselves have heard from his own lips". And the whole multitude of them arose and brought him to Pilate.'

Lagrange, Lebreton, Prat and other commentators are agreed that as regards the crucial question and reply, the three Synoptics are reporting one and the same episode. And all three Gospels agree that Jesus' reply was understood by his judges as an affirmative. Luke brings out most clearly that it was because Jesus admitted that he was the Son of God that he was condemned by the Sanhedrin to death. All three Gospels, too, report Jesus' implicit reference to the prophecies of Psalm 109 and Daniel 7, which foretold his triumph. That triumph, he told his judges, was about to begin, meaning no doubt the triumph of his cause, his Gospel.

*Peter's Denials; Jesus Maltreated; Suicide of Judas (M. 26 and 27; Mk. 14; L. 22; Acts 1)*

During the night, Peter, who was among the onlookers, on being challenged by different people, three times denied that he was one of Jesus' followers. At the third denial, says Luke, a cock was heard to crow 'and the Lord turning looked on Peter.' Then Peter remembered what his Master had foretold, and, going out, wept bitterly.

During the night, too, Jesus, after the Sanhedrin had declared him guilty (M. and Mk.), was maltreated by his guards, who mocked and struck him and spat on him. After blindfolding him, they would give him a blow and say, 'Prophecy to us, O Christ, who was it that struck thee?' and other such cruel mockeries they inflicted on him.

The fact that Judas did not figure as a witness at Jesus' trial may indicate that he was already ashamed of the part he had played. At any rate, the result of the trial threw him into despair. He made a frantic effort to undo his work by return-



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ing the reward he had received for it, saying, 'I have sinned in betraying innocent blood.' The men who had used him, however, merely said, 'That's your affair,' and Judas then went and hanged himself.

*Jesus Before Pilate (J. 18; M. 27; Mk. 15; L. 23)*

As early as possible on the Friday, the Jews brought Jesus before the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate, to have him condemned to death. But to obtain this judgment, it was necessary to replace the religious by a political charge, and so they now accused him of causing sedition, attacking the tribute, and claiming to be the Messianic King. Pilate opened his interrogation with the question, 'Art thou the King of the Jews?' According to the three Synoptics, Jesus replied,

Thou sayest it,

and declined to make any further reply. According to the fuller report by John, Jesus replied,

Sayest thou this of thyself, or have others told it thee about me?

Pilate answered, 'Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee to me: What hast thou done?' Jesus then said,

My kingdom is not of this world. Had my kingdom been of this world, my servants would have fought that I should not be delivered to the Jews. But no, my kingdom is not hence [does not take its origin here].

Pilate said, 'Thou art then a king?' Jesus replied,

Thou sayest it, I am a king. For this was I born, and for this am I come into the world, that I may witness to the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

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'Thou sayest [it]; I am a king' (lit. 'Thou sayest, that I am a king') is the same idiom as that used by Our Lord in Luke's account of his trial before the Sanhedrin: 'Ye say that I am.' The Sanhedrin had taken it as an affirmative reply to their question, and on the strength of it had found Jesus guilty of blasphemy (cf. also Jesus' reply to Judas at the Last Supper). Jesus went on to explain the nature of the kingdom founded on truth. At this Pilate exclaimed, 'What is truth?' and he then went out to the Jews, who had not entered the palace in order not to incur defilement just before the Passover, and told them, 'I find no crime in this man.' But they were insistent, declaring, 'He has stirred up the whole country, from Galilee even to this place.' Pilate then asked if Jesus was a Galilean, and receiving an affirmative answer, decided to send him to Herod, Tetrarch of Galilee, who happened to be in Jerusalem then, either in order to obtain more information on the case or perhaps hoping that Herod would take it off his hands.

Jesus was then taken through the streets from Pilate's Praetorium, which tradition places in the fortress of Antonia, to the palace of Herod (probably the palace of the Hasmonaeans). The Tetrarch's curiosity and vanity were alike gratified by this sight of the notorious prophet and the attention shown by Pilate. But Jesus remained silent to all questions. More mockery followed, the irritated prince ordering this pretended 'King' to be dressed up in 'a bright robe'. Thus garbed, Jesus was taken back to the Governor's palace. But Herod, as Pilate now told the Jews, had not confirmed their charges against Jesus: 'I have not found any guilt in this man in regard of the accusations which ye make against him. No, nor yet hath Herod. . . .' According to Luke, Pilate here offered to have Jesus scourged—to satisfy the Jews—and then release him. But the Jews replied, 'Away



with this man, and release to us Barabbas.' For it was customary at the Passover to release some prisoner, according to the people's choice. Mark's account suggests that a crowd of Jews had arrived to demand the usual act of clemency for a prisoner, and that Pilate took advantage of their request to escape passing sentence on Jesus, 'for he knew that it was out of envy that the high priests had delivered him up.' So he promptly offered to release Jesus, but the crowd replied that it was Barabbas they wanted. Pilate then put the choice before them: 'Whom will ye that I release to you, Barabbas or Jesus who is called Christ?' While this was being discussed among the crowd, he received a message from his wife, who said, 'Have thou naught to do with that just man, for I have suffered many things in a dream to-day because of him.' Meanwhile, the people had been moved by their leaders to ask for the notorious criminal Barabbas. 'What then shall I do with him whom ye call the King of the Jews?' asked Pilate. And they cried out, 'Crucify him.'

But Pilate still thought that if he had Jesus scourged, his enemies might be satisfied. So Jesus was handed over to the soldiers, who inflicted the savage punishment. Afterwards, while waiting perhaps for the Governor to return, they followed the example set by Herod and began to mock this 'King'. They threw a military cloak over his shoulders, made a crown of plaited thorns and pressed it down on his head, and placed a reed or stick in his right hand. Then they made mock obeisance, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews.' Irritated by his meek submission, they spat on him and gave him blows. All this furthered Pilate's plan, and he now had Jesus led out just as he was to show to the crowd. 'Behold the man,' he said. But they only shouted, 'Crucify him! Crucify him!'

Pilate could not understand this persistence. 'Take him yourselves and crucify him,' he said angrily, 'for I find no

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crime in him.' Then the Jews revealed the true cause of their hatred. 'We have a law,' they said, 'and according to the law he must die, because he hath made himself [out to be] Son of God.' These words only increased Pilate's reluctance. Re-entering the judgment hall, he asked Jesus, 'Whence art thou?' Jesus made no reply. 'Speakest thou not to me?' said Pilate, 'Knowest thou not that I have power to release thee, and that I have power to crucify thee?' Jesus answered,

Thou wouldst have no power over me, were it not given thee from above; for this cause, he that hath delivered me to thee hath the greater sin.

These two sentences would need no explanation but for their conjunction by the phrase 'for this cause', which has given rise, says Fr. Prat, to an 'infinite' number of commentaries. However, taking the passage simply as it stands, it makes excellent sense: Pilate was exercising authority which, like all true authority, came from God; those who sought Jesus' death by means of Pilate's sentence were therefore the more guilty because they were making use of God-given authority for their evil purpose. In other words, judicial murder is a greater sin than murder alone. That was the only comparison made here. But the first sentence was the more important at the moment, the second being only an incidental consequence. Jesus was reminding Pilate of his responsibility as a judge: he would have to render account to a higher authority than Caesar. And the reminder was not without effect. 'After this,' says the evangelist, 'Pilate sought to release him.' This led the Jews to play their strongest card: 'If thou release this man, thou art no friend of Caesar's; every one who maketh himself a king sets himself against Caesar.' Pilate's belated resolution quickly collapsed before the implied threat of delation to Rome, and preparations were made for the



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delivery of sentence—the sentence demanded by the Jews. Whether by way of a last appeal or to give vent to his feelings towards the Jews, he pointed to Jesus and called out, ‘Behold your king!’ ‘Away with him,’ they shouted, ‘Crucify him!’ ‘Am I to crucify your king?’ he asked, and the chief priests replied, ‘We have no king but Caesar.’ Then, in a vain attempt to exculpate himself, Pilate called for water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, ‘I am innocent of this blood; do ye look to it.’ The people answered, ‘His blood be upon us and upon our children.’ And therewith, Pilate passed sentence of crucifixion on the man he had declared to be innocent of crime.

#### *Jesus’ Crucifixion and Death (M. 27; Mk. 15; L. 23; J. 19)*

It was some time after 11 a.m. when the sentence was pronounced, and by mid-day it had been carried out. Crucifixion was regarded as an ignominious punishment—Cicero calls it ‘the punishment of slaves’—and to add to the ignominy the condemned criminal was usually made to carry the transverse beam of his cross to the place of execution. A placard, slung round his neck or carried before him, gave his name and the crime for which he was to suffer. Thus, Jesus was given his own garments, and was then led out to execution, ‘bearing his own cross’. Two other condemned men were led to execution with him. A great multitude followed. But Jesus’ strength was already so much reduced by what he had undergone that it proved unequal to the task of ‘bearing his cross’. So the soldiers requisitioned the services of a man who happened to be passing, Simon of Cyrene in North Africa, and made him carry the cross or beam behind Jesus. Among those who followed were a number of women, wailing and lamenting. Jesus turned to them, and said,

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Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over me; but weep over yourselves and over your children. For behold, days are coming wherein they shall say, 'Blessed the barren, and the wombs that have not borne, and breasts that have not suckled'. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall upon us', and to the hills, 'Bury us'; for if in the green wood they do these things, what is to befall in the dry?

Most commentators understand the 'green wood' to signify the innocent Jesus and the 'dry wood' guilty Israel. 'When the justice of God seems apparently to strike even the innocent, what will it not do to the guilty? The image is of a person so bent upon making a fire that he takes even green wood; clearly he will not pass over any dry wood' (Lagrange). The place of execution was a slight eminence somewhat resembling a skull and accordingly named Golgotha (Latin, Calvary), lying just beyond the city walls (Heb. 13, 12). On arriving there, Jesus was offered some wine, which had been mixed with a drug to deaden the sense of pain, but after tasting it he refused the drink. Then the executioners removed his garments and fastened him to the cross, driving nails through his hands and feet. According to the usual custom, the transverse beam was first nailed to the upright post which was already in position, and the condemned man was then raised in some manner and fastened to the cross. The feet of the crucified were usually only just above the level of the ground, but the later incident of the sponge dipped in vinegar suggests that Jesus' body was raised three or four feet from the ground. The two criminals were likewise crucified, one on each side and Jesus in the middle. Affixed to the cross, above Jesus' head, was the placard indicating his name and crime: 'This is Jesus the King of the Jews' (M.); 'The King of the Jews' (Mk.); 'This is the King of the Jews' (L.); 'Jesus the Nazarene, the King of the Jews' (J.). John



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tells us that the high priests had protested to Pilate against this inscription: 'Write not "the King of the Jews", but "He said, I am the King of the Jews".' Pilate, however, had dismissed their protest with the words, 'What I have written, I have written.' While he was being fastened to his cross Jesus uttered only one word,

Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

At this supreme moment, he put into practice what he had so often preached to others—forgiveness of enemies. So too the first Christian martyr, Stephen, would pray for those who stoned him to death, 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge' (Acts 7, 60). The four executioners, meanwhile, were dividing among themselves Jesus' clothes. His tunic, however, 'was without seam, woven from the top throughout,' and rather than cut it they cast lots for it, and so unconsciously fulfilled the prophecy of Psalm 21: 'They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture they cast lots.'

The hostile crowd which had followed Jesus to Calvary now mocked him on his cross: 'Thou who wouldst overthrow the temple and in three days build it up, save thyself. If thou art Son of God, come down from the cross!' Even the high priests and scribes and elders were not ashamed to jeer at their victim: 'Others he saved, himself he cannot save. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusted in God, let him deliver him now, if he will have him; for he said, "I am Son of God." ' The soldiers, and even one of the crucified robbers joined in the ugly chorus. 'Art thou not the Christ?' sneered the latter, 'Save thyself and us.' But his fellow-thief turned on him, saying, 'Dost thou not even fear God, seeing that thou art under the same sentence? And ourselves indeed justly, for we are receiving the fitting reward of our deeds,

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but this man hath done naught amiss.' He then said, 'Jesus, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom.' Jesus replied,

Amen, I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in paradise.

'Paradise' for the Jews was that part of Sheol which was the abode of the just (cf. Chap. 7: Parable of Rich Man and Lazarus). And now Jerusalem and its surroundings became shrouded in darkness, which continued during the three hours that Jesus remained still living. Under this significant pall, the mockeries and cries of hate died away into an awed silence. Meanwhile, the Mother of Jesus, a female relative or two, and Mary Magdalene, escorted by the disciple John, had approached to the foot of the cross. A larger group of friends, including the women who had followed Jesus from Galilee—John's own mother among them—watched from further off. When Jesus, therefore, saw his mother and 'the disciple whom he loved' standing there, he said to Mary,

Woman, behold thy son.

And to John,

Behold thy mother.

Like the dutiful son that he had never ceased to be, Jesus thus made provision for his mother's future. And from that hour, writes John himself, 'the disciple took her to his own [home].'

The afternoon wore on, and then towards three o'clock, Jesus cried out with a loud voice,

Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? [My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?]



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It was the opening line of Psalm 21, in which the Passion of the Messiah had been foretold, as also his final triumph. The mockery of his enemies—almost the very words—the physical sufferings, the parting of his garments, all had been foretold there, e.g. 'My palate is dried up like a potsherd and my tongue cleaves to my jaws.' Thirst was one of the most agonizing tortures which attended crucifixion, and Jesus, perhaps mentally reciting the rest of the psalm, 'that the Scripture might be fulfilled' (J.) said aloud,

I thirst.

John, who records this word but not the previous one, says, 'There was standing near a vessel full of vinegar. Having therefore put a sponge full of the vinegar upon a stalk of hyssop, they put it to his mouth.' The vinegar was the thin wine drunk by the soldiers, and the sponge may have served as a cork to the jar or bottle. A happy emendation has replaced 'stalk of hyssop' (too slight for the purpose) by a word meaning a short javelin, a weapon about two feet long. This, if correct, gives us the approximate height of the cross.

According to the accounts given by Matthew and Mark, when Jesus uttered the words, 'Eloi, Eloi . . .' some of the bystanders misunderstood him and said, 'He is calling Elias.' Then one of them ran and took a sponge, filled it with vinegar, put it on a reed, and held it up to Jesus, while, according to Matthew, the rest said, 'Let be, let us see whether Elias is coming to save him.' According to Mark, it was the compassionate bystander who, as though in reply to some protest, said, 'Let be . . . etc.'

By the words, 'Why hast thou forsaken me?' neither the psalmist nor Our Lord meant that God had abandoned him as he abandons the wicked, but that he had abandoned him to his enemies, did not rescue him from imminent death nor

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mitigate with any consolation his cruel sufferings. Jesus thereby expressed the agony of his passion, just as in Gethsemane the apprehension of it had caused him to sweat blood and pray, 'Father, if it be possible, etc. ?

John says that after taking the vinegar, Jesus said,

It is finished.

And bowing his head, he gave up his spirit. Matthew and Mark both say that Jesus uttered a loud cry, and then expired. Luke tells us that Jesus called out with a loud voice,

Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.

And with these words, he expired. At that moment, according to Matthew, 'the curtain of the Sanctuary [the Holy of Holies]' was rent from top to bottom, and the earth quaked, opening some of the tombs—the whited sepulchres to which Jesus had referred—in the neighbourhood, 'and many bodies of the saints that had gone to their rest arose and coming forth from their tombs after his resurrection they entered the holy city and appeared to many.' The awe-stricken centurion, in charge of the execution, exclaimed, 'Truly, this man was Son of God (Indeed this man was just—L.)', while the formerly hostile crowd returned home beating their breasts.

John tells us that the Jews asked Pilate to have the bodies removed before the Sabbath of the Passover, and that accordingly the soldiers were ordered to finish off the crucified men by breaking their legs. Jesus, however, they found already dead and so they did not break his legs, but one of them thrust his lance into the dead man's side, 'and straightway there came forth blood and water.' This made a great impression on John who witnessed it and who saw in the water and blood symbols of baptism and the sacrifice of redemption (1 John 5, 6).



*Jesus' Burial (M. 27; Mk. 15; L. 23; J. 19)*

Meanwhile, a member of the Sanhedrin who secretly believed in Jesus, Joseph of Arimathea, had made a petition to Pilate that Jesus' body might be given to his friends for burial. Having ascertained by enquiry that Jesus was really dead, the Governor granted Joseph's petition. As it happened, Joseph had prepared a grave for himself, hewn out of the rock, in a garden not far from Calvary, and this he now gave to Jesus. He and Nicodemus, another councillor and secret sympathiser, brought cloth of fine linen and a great quantity of myrrh and aloes to preserve the body, which had to be given a provisional and hasty burial on account of the Sabbath. They then took Jesus down from the cross and some of the holy women prepared it for burial. The body was then taken to the tomb, which was afterwards closed with a great stone.

On the following morning, according to Matthew, the Jewish leaders went to Pilate and said, 'Sir, we have remembered how that impostor said when still alive, "After three days I rise again." Command, therefore, that the sepulchre be made secure until the third day, lest haply his disciples come and steal him away and say to the people, "He hath risen from the dead", and thus the last imposture would be worse than the first.' Pilate replied, 'Ye have a guard, go, make it secure as ye know how.' So they went and made the tomb secure, putting a seal on the stone, and setting a guard over it.

*The Resurrection (M. 28; Mk. 16; L. 24; J. 20)*

The Apostles' Creed, which summarizes the earliest teaching of the Church, says that after the separation of his human soul and body, Jesus 'descended into hell', i.e. his soul went to Hades or Sheol, the abode of the dead, but not into what

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we call hell, i.e. the lower part of Sheol, which the Jews called Gehenna. He went, as he had told the repentant thief, to 'Paradise', that part of Sheol where the just souls awaited what may be described as the opening of the doors of heaven. St. Peter says that 'in spirit he went and preached to the souls in prison' (1 Pet. 3, 19).

Then, on the third day, as he had foretold, Jesus' soul re-animated the sacred body lying in the tomb. He returned to life in his flesh, but in a flesh now glorified, freed from the limitations of ordinary human life. Thus, it would seem that he passed invisibly through the grave clothes, which were afterwards found lying in the place where the body had been, and out of the sealed tomb. Then there was an earthquake and an angel rolled back the stone which had closed the tomb, whereat the guards, struck with terror, 'became as dead men'. When the latter had recovered, they fled to the city and reported what had happened to the high priests.

Meanwhile on the previous evening, as soon as the Sabbath was ended, the holy women had prepared spices and myrrh to complete the embalmment of Jesus' body, and very early in the morning they set out for the tomb. On the way, they remembered the great stone which closed the tomb, and began anxiously to wonder how they would get it moved. But when they arrived, they found that the stone had already been rolled back. They entered the tomb, which seems to have had a shelf on either side with a passage between, but instead of the body they had seen laid on the right-hand shelf, they saw sitting there an angel in the form of a young man dressed in white. (Luke speaks of two angels.) He said to them, 'Be not terrified. Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified. Why seek ye among the dead him who liveth? He is not here; for he is risen, even as he said; come, behold the place where he lay. And go ye quickly and tell his disciples



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(and Peter—Mk.) that he is risen from the dead. . . .’ This they did, and Peter and John went hastily to the tomb.

All three Synoptics put Mary Magdalene in this group of holy women, but John tells us that she reached the tomb first and on finding it empty ran at once to tell Peter, whom she found with John. She told them, ‘They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they have laid him.’ The two disciples then hurried to the tomb. John, as he says, outran Peter and reached the tomb first. Looking inside, he could see the grave-clothes in which Jesus’ body had been wrapped still lying there, but no body. When Peter arrived, they both entered the empty tomb and John says that at that moment he knew that Jesus had risen: ‘he saw and believed.’ After they had gone back to the city, Mary Magdalene returned to the tomb, and stood before it weeping. Stooping to take another look inside, she saw two angels in white sitting one at the head and the other at the feet where the body of Jesus had lain. They said to her, ‘Woman, why weepest thou?’ She said, ‘Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.’ As she spoke, she was conscious of someone standing behind her. In the dim light she could not see who it was, nor did she recognize his voice when he said,

Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?

Taking him to be the man in charge of the garden, she said, ‘Sir, if thou hast carried him away, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will remove him.’ Then Jesus, for it was he, said,

Mary!

At once she recognized him, and exclaimed, ‘Rabboni! [Master!]

She threw herself at his feet and embraced them. Jesus said,

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Hold me not; for I have not yet ascended to the Father.  
But go to my brethren, and say to them, 'I ascend to my  
Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'

The sense appears to be: 'Do not clasp me thus, as though you were afraid of losing me again. I have not yet ascended to my Father, so you will have other opportunities of seeing me. But I shall ascend shortly. Go and tell my disciples.' So Mary Magdalene went and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord and what he had said to her. But they could not believe her.

The last twelve verses of Mark are evidently an addition to the Gospel, possibly by St. Mark himself, and certainly part of Holy Scripture. There, too, we are told that Jesus, after his resurrection, first appeared to Mary Magdalene. It would seem that Matthew is speaking of the same appearance when, after recording the visit of the women to the tomb, he says, 'And behold Jesus met them and said,

Hail.

'And drawing near they embraced his feet and worshipped him.' Then Jesus said to them,

Fear not; go, tell my brethren to depart into Galilee,  
and there they shall see me.

It is one of Matthew's characteristics to combine several happenings in a single narrative, and also to attribute to a group what happened to a single member of it.

As we have seen, the men who guarded the tomb had reported to the chief priests what had happened there. A hasty conference was called, and as a result the Jewish leaders gave the soldiers much money to say that the disciples had come by night and stolen the body, while they themselves were asleep. The Jews promised that if any action was taken against the



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soldiers, they would intervene to protect them. And so this became the official account of the affair.

That same day, two of Jesus' followers—not of the Eleven—left Jerusalem to go to Emmaus. As they journeyed on foot, they talked sadly together of the past week's happenings. They were overtaken by one whom they did not recognize, who said to them,

What words are these that ye exchange one with another  
as ye walk along?

One of the two, named Cleophas, said, 'What, art thou the only pilgrim in Jerusalem who hast not heard what things have happened there in the last few days?' He said to them,

What things?

'Concerning Jesus of Nazareth,' they replied, 'a prophet, mighty in work and word before God and all the people, and how our high priests and rulers delivered him to be condemned to death and crucified him. Ourselves were hoping that it was he who should redeem Israel. Yea, and besides all this it is now the third day since these things befell; and moreover certain women of ours have amazed us, who went at dawn to the tomb and found not his body, but came saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who say that he is alive. So some of our company went off to the tomb, and found it was even as the women had said, but him they saw not.' Then Jesus said to them,

O senseless men, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things, and thus enter into his glory?

And, going back to Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them what these had said about himself. They were still talking when they reached the village where they were to

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stop, and Jesus made as though he would continue along the road. But they said to him, 'Stay with us, for evening approacheth and already the day declineth.' So he went in with them, and when they had taken their places at the table, he took the bread and blessed and broke and handed it to them. At that moment, they recognized him, and as they did so he vanished from their sight. They said one to another, 'Was not our heart burning within us whilst he spoke to us on the way, whilst he laid open to us the scriptures?' At once, they arose and returned to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven together, all but Thomas, and were told, 'The Lord is risen indeed and hath appeared to Simon.' They in turn related their experiences.<sup>1</sup>

#### *The Power of Forgiving Sins (J. 20 ; L. 24)*

While they were still talking together, Jesus suddenly stood in their midst, and said,

Peace be to you.

The doors had been locked for fear of the Jews, and this mysterious appearance of the Master filled all of them with terror. They thought it was a spirit. Jesus then said to them,

Why are ye troubled, and wherefore do doubts arise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet that it is my very self.

Feel me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me to have.

<sup>1</sup> St. Paul (1 Cor. 15, 7) mentions a separate appearance of Our Lord to James. In 'The Gospel according to the Hebrews', it is related that James, the Lord's brother (cf. Chap. 3: Choice of the Twelve), 'had sworn that he would not eat bread from that hour wherein he had drunk the Lord's cup until he should see him risen again from among them that sleep'. Jesus, after his resurrection, appearing to James, called for a table and bread, and 'took bread and blessed and brake and gave it unto James the Just and said unto him:

My brother, eat thy bread, for the Son of Man is risen from among them that sleep.'



### *Jesus in His Own Words*

Jesus then showed them his hands and feet and side, bearing marks of the wounds made by the nails and lance. As they were still bewildered and could hardly believe what they were told, Jesus said,

Have ye aught here to eat?

They handed him a piece of broiled fish, and he took and ate before them. Mark says that he scolded them for their want of faith in not believing those who had already reported his resurrection. Then, according to Luke, he said,

These are my words which I spoke unto you whilst I was yet with you, even that all the things that are written in the Law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms concerning me must be fulfilled.

Then he explained to them the Scriptures, saying,

Thus it is written: that the Christ should suffer, and should rise from the dead on the third day, and that in his name should be preached repentance unto forgiveness of sins unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem: Yourselves are witnesses of these things. And behold, I send forth upon you the promise of my Father. But do ye abide in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high.

Luke seems to have condensed into one speech sayings uttered by Our Lord on different occasions. He himself states in the Acts of the Apostles that Jesus 'showed himself alive after his passion by many proofs, during forty days appearing to the apostles and speaking of the kingdom of God.' At least the latter part of the above was probably uttered on a later occasion. What Jesus said on this first appearance to the Apostles is thus recorded by John: Jesus said to them,

As the Father hath sent me, I also send you.

### *The Climax*

And when he had said this, he breathed upon them and said to them,

Receive ye the Holy Ghost [Spirit]; whose sins ye shall forgive, they are forgiven them, and whose sins ye shall retain, they are retained.

The breathing on the Apostles was a sign of the Holy Spirit, which Jesus had once before compared to the wind blowing (cf. Chap. 2: Conversation with Nicodemus). Also in the account of creation, God had 'breathed into his face the breath of life; and man became a living soul' (Gen. 2, 7). This was not the promised sending forth of the Spirit, which was to take place at Pentecost, but the imparting of a special spiritual power, namely that of forgiving sins and thereby conferring new spiritual life. It was not to be exercised indiscriminately, since in some cases, evidently where the requisite dispositions were lacking, sins were to be 'retained'.

As already mentioned, Thomas was not present at this appearance of Jesus, and, strange to say, he could not believe it when told by the other Apostles. 'Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe,' he said. But a week later, they were again together, and Thomas with them, when Jesus again came without warning, suddenly standing there and greeting them with the words,

Peace be to you.

Then he said to Thomas,

Reach hither thy finger and see my hands, and reach hither thy hand and put it into my side; and be not unbelieving, but believing.

Thomas exclaimed, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus accepted this act of faith as a matter of course, all that he found to



*Jesus in His Own Words*

comment on being Thomas' slowness in making it. He said to him,

Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed. Blessed are they that have not seen and have believed.

Thomas' act of faith is a fitting climax to the Gospel, and it was with this that John first concluded his Gospel, only adding: 'Many other signs also did Jesus in the sight of the disciples, that are not written in this book; but these are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, ye may have life in his name.'

*Supreme Authority Conferred on Peter (J. 21)*

In the fourth Gospel as we have it, however, there is an additional chapter or appendix telling how Jesus 'manifested himself again to the disciples' at the Lakeside in Galilee, the scene of his early ministry. Peter, James, John, Thomas, Nathanael and two other disciples unnamed had spent the night on the Lake in Peter's boat, fishing. At daybreak, as they approached the shore they saw a man whom they did not recognize standing there. He said to them,

Children, have ye any fish?

They answered, 'No.' Then he said,

Cast the net to the right side of the ship, and ye shall find.

So they made the cast, and now the net was so heavy with fish that they could not haul it in. At once John said to Peter, 'It is the Lord.' Thereupon Peter put on his upper garment and, jumping into the sea, waded to shore, while the other disciples followed him in the boat, dragging the net full of fish. On landing, they saw a fire prepared, with fish cooking on it, and bread. Jesus said to them,

Bring some of the fish which ye have now taken.

*The Climax*

When the big catch had been safely landed, Jesus said,

Come and breakfast.

And he himself served them with bread and fish. After the meal, Jesus said to Peter,

Simon, son of John, lovest thou me [*agapas me*] more than do these?

Peter replied, 'Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee [*philo se*].' Then Jesus said,

Feed my lambs.

Then a second time, Jesus asked,

Simon, son of John, lovest thou me [*agapas me*]?

Peter answered, 'Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee [*philo se*].' Jesus said,

Shepherd my sheep.

Yet a third time Jesus asked,

Simon, son of John, lovest thou me [*phileis me*]?

Peter was grieved at the apparent doubt thrown upon his previous declarations, and he said, 'Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee [*philo se*].' Jesus said to him,

Feed my sheep. Amen, amen, I say to thee, when thou wast young, thou didst gird thyself, and didst walk whither thou wouldst; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee and lead thee whither thou wouldst not.

Jesus here foretold, says the evangelist, by what manner of death Peter would glorify God. The threefold profession of



love demanded of Peter was clearly in expiation of his threefold denial. Two Greek words are used for 'love' in these questions and answers, *agapan* and *philein*; the difference roughly is that in the former 'love' there is more of reason and will, and in the latter more of heart and feeling (cf. Chap. 3: The New Spirit—Charity). Peter uses *philein* each time; Jesus uses *agapan* twice, and the third time *philein*, but the significance, if any, is lost in translation. There is also, according to some MSS., a gradation in the threefold commission given to Peter: (1) lambs; (2) young sheep; (3) sheep. Father Hugh Pope points out in his *Layman's New Testament*: 'At the time of writing John was the sole surviving Apostle and shortly to die; Peter had been dead some thirty years; the whole force then of his appendix is lost if we fail to realize that Peter lives on in his successors and that in a very true sense the then reigning Bishop of Rome, St. Clement, was more important for the life of the Church than was St. John himself.' Having concluded his commission to Peter, Jesus rose to go, saying,

Follow me.

As is clear from what follows, these words had also a spiritual significance. John went with them, and Peter said to Jesus, 'And what of him, Lord?' Jesus replied,

" If I wish him to remain until I come, what is it to thee?  
Do thou follow me.

This saying of Jesus gave rise to the belief that John would survive until the Second Coming, but it is added that this was not what Jesus said. The sense of Our Lord's saying seems to have been: 'Well, supposing I wish him to remain until I come, what concern is it of yours?'

## *The Climax*

### *Commission to Apostles (M. 28 ; Mk. 16)*

Matthew reports another appearance of Our Lord in Galilee, to the Eleven on a hillside, we are not told where. When they saw him, he says, they worshipped him, but some doubted. This is the first appearance to the Eleven recorded by Matthew, and the 'doubts' mentioned here may have been those connected with the real first appearance which had already taken place in Jerusalem. Both Matthew and Mark have condensed the events of the forty days into a fewer number of lines. It was apparently on this occasion that Jesus gave the Apostles their commission:

All power in heaven and on earth hath been given me. Go ye, therefore, make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you: and behold, I am with you all days unto the consummation of the world (M.).

Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: he that believeth not shall be condemned. And these signs shall follow them that believe: in my name they shall cast out devils, they shall speak with new tongues, and they shall take up serpents in their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not harm them; they shall lay hands upon the sick and they shall recover (Mk.).

### *The Ascension (Acts 1 ; L. 24 ; Mk. 16)*

The Eleven reassembled at Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost, and it was there that they saw Jesus on earth for the last time. He instructed them not to leave Jerusalem, but to await there the promise of the Father—

whereof ye have heard from me; for John baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence.



*Jesus in His Own Words*

He led them out of the city and over the Mount of Olives in the direction of Bethany, and on the way some of them asked him, 'Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?' He replied,

It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father hath appointed by his own authority; but ye shall receive power from the coming of the Holy Spirit upon you, and ye shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and Samaria, and unto the end of the earth.

Then Jesus stopped and, raising his hands in blessing, was lifted up before their eyes, and so ascended heavenwards, until a cloud hid him from their view. As they stood gazing upwards and worshipping him, two men appeared at their side, clothed in white, who said to them, 'Men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? This Jesus, who hath been taken up from you into heaven, will come after the same manner wherein ye have beheld him going into heaven.' So they returned, full of joy, to Jerusalem. And Jesus 'was taken up into heaven and took his seat at the right hand of God'.

## EPILOGUE

THE ASCENSION TOOK place forty days after the Passover of A.D. 30. About ten days later, on the Jewish Feast of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended upon the Twelve—Judas' place had been filled by Matthias—and more than a hundred others of both sexes, including the Mother of Jesus, and those relations who are spoken of as Jesus' brethren—these had come to believe in him. Thus the infant Church received the baptism of the Spirit promised by Jesus Christ, and the effect was immediately apparent in extraordinary manifestations and especially in the transformation of the hitherto timid disciples into a band of resolute, confident Apostles. 'When Jesus Christ himself was beginning his work of preaching he had been manifested by the Eternal Father through the Holy Spirit under the form of a dove, descending and remaining on him. So now in like manner, when the Apostles were about to begin their sacred work of preaching, Christ our Lord sent his Spirit from heaven to touch them with tongues of fire and, like a divine finger, to indicate the supernatural mission and function of the Church' (Pope Pius XII: *Encyclical on the Mystical Body of Christ*).

Twice Jesus himself appears in Luke's record of the Acts of the Apostles. The first martyr, Stephen, was strengthened for his ordeal by a vision of Jesus in heaven standing at the right hand of God. Shortly afterwards, the as yet unconverted Paul, struck down and blinded by light from heaven on the road to Damascus, heard a voice saying to him,

Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute me?

'Who art thou, Lord,' he asked, and was told,



### *Jesus in His Own Words*

I am Jesus, whom thou dost persecute. But arise and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

We note that Jesus spoke of persecution of his followers as persecution of himself, as he had previously said, 'Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me' (Chap. 8: Love for Christ shown by Love for Brethren). In Damascus Jesus also spoke to a certain disciple called Ananias, and bade him,

Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and seek in the house of Judas one Saul, from Tarsus; for behold, he prayeth.

Ananias answered, 'Lord, I have heard from many about this man, and of all the evil that he has done to the saints in Jerusalem. . . .' But the Lord said to him,

Go, for this man is a vessel chosen by me, to bear my name before nations and kings and the children of Israel. For I will show him how much he must undergo for my name.

When later Paul enumerated various appearances of Jesus after his resurrection, he included this one: 'Last of all . . . he appeared also to me' (1 Cor. 15, 8). Jesus, for the Apostles, was not a figure of the past but someone still living and watching over them from heaven; he could as easily manifest himself whenever he wished as he had done before his Ascension.

Only one other saying of Jesus is recorded in the Acts, and that was an earlier utterance (not recorded in the Gospels):

It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Paul quoted this saying (Acts 20, 35).

The Gospels have told us how Jesus gradually revealed himself as the Messiah, but as a Messiah who was more than

## *Epilogue*

human, Son of God in a unique sense, and finally as a Divine Person. The unfolding of so extraordinary a revelation had been slow and arduous, but how well and truly the foundations had been laid was seen in the unanimous and confident faith of the Church from its very beginning. 'Jesus is the Lord' summed up their belief, 'my Lord' being the title commonly used in place of the proper name of God, Jehovah or Yahweh; and unhesitatingly these fervent monotheists addressed their worship and prayer to Jesus Christ the Son along with God the Father. It remained for St. John to complete the Christian revelation contained in the New Testament by identifying the Divine Son with 'the Word' of God. God is a spirit, a pure intelligence, and 'the son' of such a being is his thought—his 'word' or wisdom. To discuss the possible sources of this identification by St. John would be outside the scope of this work. This much, however, was necessary by way of introduction to John's own prelude to the Gospel, which forms our epilogue:

'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was made nothing that hath been made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men; and the light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness hath not overcome it. . . . It was the true light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world [or, It was the true light which, coming into the world, enlighteneth every man]. He was in the world and the world was made through him, and the world knew him not. He came to what was his, and his own received him not. But to as many as received him he gave power to become children of God, to them that believed in his name, that were begotten not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh and



*Jesus in His Own Words*

dwelt amongst us, and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only-begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. . . . For of his fulness we have all received, and grace on grace; for the Law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. God no man hath seen at any time; God only-begotten, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.'

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